



Circuit Court of Jackson County, Missouri

415 East 12th Street
Kansas City, Missouri 64106

J. DALE YOUNGS
PRESIDING JUDGE

DIVISION 6
(816) 881-3606

To: Area Bar Associations

From: J. Dale Youngs, Presiding Judge

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "J. Dale Youngs".

Date: January 19, 2022

Re: **MEMORANDUM REGARDING CASE PROCESSING TIMES**

The ongoing labor shortage throughout the country continues to have a challenging impact on the 16th Judicial Circuit. Although efforts are underway, including in the Missouri General Assembly, to implement salary increases for Court and other employees, pay for Court employees continues to be some of the lowest in the nation. For example, Missouri currently pays *80 percent* of Court Clerks throughout the state *less than \$15.00 an hour*. As a result, the Jackson County Circuit Court faces ongoing challenges attracting and retaining qualified employees. Vacancy rates in key Court departments like Civil, Criminal and Probate Records, as well as in our Civil Process Department, remain around 25 percent. Compounding the situation, absences as a result of the recent surge in COVID-19 cases among our staff and their families have caused further strain on our processes and our dedicated employees who are already routinely asked to “do more with less.”

The Court previously notified Bar Associations in our area of changes in case processing times given these staffing issues. Another copy of that Notice is attached. Starting in November 2021, processing times for filings with the Criminal Records Department were extended past one week, and the Civil Records Department extended its normal processing times from the prior standard of four to six business days to 10 business days. We also prioritized the processing of pleadings that fell into two categories: 1) Those that can be identified and expedited by the Court’s clerical staff; and 2) those that attorneys request for expedited processing.

Because of staff shortages at the end of 2021 and during the first two weeks of this

year, the time needed for records staff to process non-priority matters increased slightly; however, thanks to the hard work of those team members and their department directors, we have held firm on our commitment to process priority filings within one to two business days.

We will continue to monitor and adjust these efforts, as necessary, and to work to recruit and retain additional personnel in the months ahead. We also support efforts in the General Assembly to increase the pay of our State-funded employees to more closely resemble what most of us would consider a living wage, and urge Bar Associations and their members to do the same. **In the meantime, it is critical that attorneys practicing in the 16th Judicial Circuit be aware of these ongoing delays in case processing, as they necessarily impact the time between the filing of a motion or other pleading and its presentment to the Judge to whom the case is assigned. Attorneys filing time-sensitive pleadings in already-filed cases should contact the assigned Division and, if appropriate, send courtesy copies of the pleading to that Division.**

Thank you as always for your support and patience as we continue to work as a Court to keep “justice delayed from being justice denied.” As always, please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

JDY/ed
Attachment



16th Circuit Court, Jackson County, Missouri

November 22, 2021

Notice to Area Bar Associations

The labor shortage that is affecting businesses throughout the country is also affecting the judicial system in Jackson County. Salaries for the Court staff who are paid by the State of Missouri have traditionally been among the lowest in the nation. As a result, the Jackson County Circuit Court is having a difficult time attracting and retaining employees in this current business climate. The Court is presently operating with an overall employee vacancy rate in its Civil, Criminal and Probate Records Departments, and Civil Process Department of 25 percent.

As a result, the Court would like to inform you of some changes that we have made in case processing times with the current level of staffing. The processing time for filings with the Criminal Records Department is currently beyond the one week standard that was adhered to previously. The Civil Records Department has also extended its normal processing times from the prior standard of 4—6 business days to 10 business days.

Despite this extension, there are pleadings that can be prioritized and processed more quickly in certain circumstances. These prioritized pleadings fall into two categories: 1) those that can be identified and expedited by the Court's clerical staff and 2) those that attorneys can request for expedited processing.

The first category includes certain pleadings, which when filed with the correct docket code identifying them as fitting within these categories, will be prioritized and sent to the divisions within 1—2 business days. Those include:

- Case Action Motions
- Drivers cases
- Injunctions and Temporary Restraining Orders
- Judicial Review – Filing False Documents
- Notices of Engaged Counsel
- Post-Conviction Relief (29.15 and 24.035)
- Writ of Habeas Corpus

The second category includes additional pleadings which can also be prioritized and sent to the assigned division on an expedited basis. However, unlike the first category of pleadings, if you need expedited processing, you need to notify the Court as there is not a code on these types of documents that would alert the Records staff to process them more quickly. Included:

- Articles of Incorporation

Declaratory Judgment (with motion/order)
Election Contest
Eminent Domain (Condemnations)
Ex Parte Application (Out-of-State Witness) CR/CVL
Interpleader Actions
Lis Pendens
Petition to Serve as Legal Publication
Replevin with Bond
Warehouse License
Writ of Certiorari
Writ of Mandamus
Writ of Prohibition

In addition, for pleadings filed in existing cases, attorneys should send courtesy copies to the assigned division in time sensitive matters.