

March 17, 2020

Statement from the Circuit Attorney of the City of St. Louis

In an effort to protect Circuit Attorney Office's employees, public servants who work inside our city's courts, and the general public from the possible spread of COVID 19 virus, Circuit Attorney Gardner has initiated the following measures:

- A. If anyone feels ill or exhibit flu or cold like symptoms, those employees are required to remain home with recommendation to "self-quarantine" as suggested by the Center for Disease Control. If anyone is exposed to COVID-19 and/or mandatory quarantine for 14 days such leave will not count against employee sick time earned. We must try to promote social distancing and other city, state, federal health recommendation to prevent the spread of the virus.
- B. Warrant office - will be by appointment only to reduce public physical contact with police officers, witnesses, victims, and the general public. We will only have essential staff needed over the weekends This will last for 60 days unless conditions change.
- C. In an effort to reduce crowding and physical public contact required for court appearances that increases the possibility of transmission of the COVID 19 virus, all Attorneys (Misdemeanors, Child support, white collar, PCR, Diversion) to continue dockets out 60 days. These are for individuals who do not pose a threat to public safety.
- D. In an effort to minimize the detention of individuals that could lead to the spread of the COVID 19 jail population, I have requested that only necessary detention hearings are to be conducted by the courts for those individuals that pose a threat to public safety.
- E. Victim Services will obtain victim statements by email and/or by phone and will limit appearances in court for necessary serious cases that a threat to public safety. We must balance public safety and make sure going forward we use non-bond options on low level nonviolent cases to help prevent the spread of the virus to jail population and jail employees.
- F. Probation Revocations: I want attorneys to ask Courts to continue all dockets out at least 60 days, unless there is a threat to public safety.
- G. Grand Jury: serious and violent cases on the docket will be prioritized. We will continue as many non-essential cases out 60 days until conditions change.
- H. Attorneys Disposition on cases all C, D and E felony cases (please adhere to and follow Charge-specific Pretrial memorandum and Circuit Attorney's office Policies and procedures that outline the office's on-going efforts to reduce the jail population).

- I. Trials set within 30 days: For serious cases that involve a victim, victim cases where witnesses are traveling from out of town, and cases with speedy trial issues, please request from the court continuances immediately and communicate with Executive staff members, Judge and Public Defenders, and private attorneys with any issue. We are currently waiting for the Courts to determine how to address speedy trial issues. However, the Circuit Attorney office will always protect the constitutional rights and procedural due process of the accused while we seek justice on behalf of the people of the City of St. Louis.
- J. In efforts to further reduce the jail population that could lead to the spread of COVID 19 virus to pretrial detainees and eventually to the general public, we coordinating cash bail alternatives in cases the include conditioned release and personal recognizance with the courts, PDs, private Attorneys
- K. We will continue to cooperatively work with courts and city officials to further our effort to reduce the spread of the spread COVID 19 virus in the St. Louis region. Consequently, it is likely that there will be additional changes to address the challenge we face to address the COVID 19 virus pandemic.