



# 2020 Judicial Summit on Mental Health

## The State of the Judiciary During COVID-19

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Administrative Director

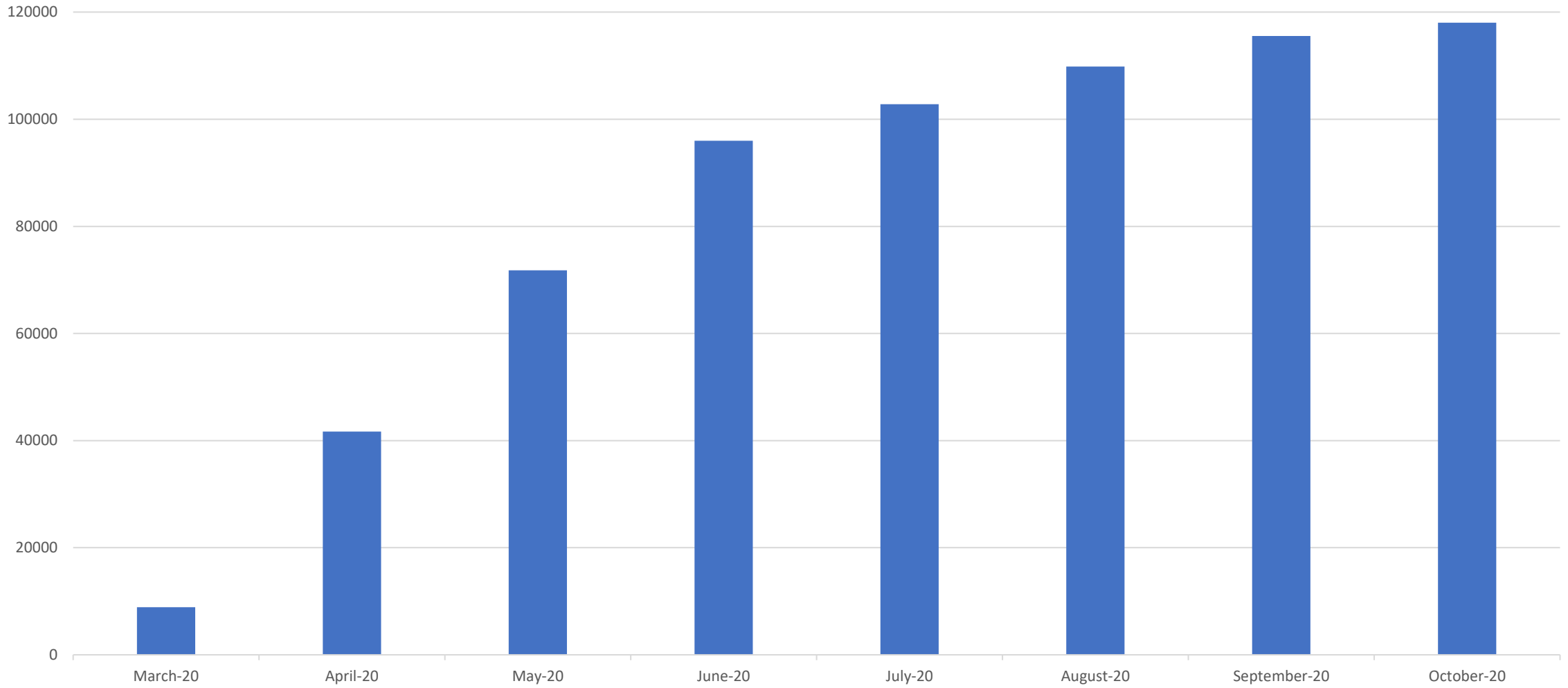
Texas Office of Court Administration

# Judiciary's Response to COVID-19

- March 12 – OCA recommends suspending to 4/1 – pushed to 6/1
- March 13 – Emerg Order #1 Issued - Remote Hearings Authorized
- March 24 – Courts start using Zoom licenses
- May 4 – Guidance for In-Person Hearings issued
- May 8 – First fully virtual jury trial
- May 27 – Jury trials prohibited through 8/1 – pushed to 10/1
- June 18 – First In-Person jury trial
- August 28 – OCA report on jury trials issued
- Sept 18 – Emerg Order #26 Issued – Jury Trials Permitted on 10/1 for district/county courts with certain criteria

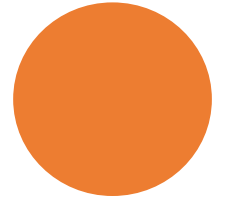


# Remote Hearings - March to October 2020



# What We've Learned

- Every hearing, every type of case
- Virtual jury trials can work
- Increased participation
- Judicial Efficiency
- Increased Access to Justice
  - Pro Bono
  - Interpreters
  - Court Reporters
- Increased need for technical staff
- Time required to assist litigants



# Filing & Disposition Trends – March-August

Case Type	Filings	Dispositions	Clearance Rate
Civil	↓ 32%	↓ 26%	97%
Family	↓ 27%	↓ 45%	65%
Felony	↓ 22%	↓ 42%	64%
Misdemeanor	↓ 31%	↓ 50%	65%
Juvenile	↓ 44%	↓ 47%	79%



# Jury Trials

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186 trials/week

0.50% of  
dispositions

Jury Trials suspended until 10/1

OCA directed to assist trial courts

- 97 requests, 96 approved
  - 34 civil, 63 criminal

50 jury trials commenced

- 45 to verdict
  - 20 civil, 25 criminal
- 1 mistrial
- 3 plea/settled

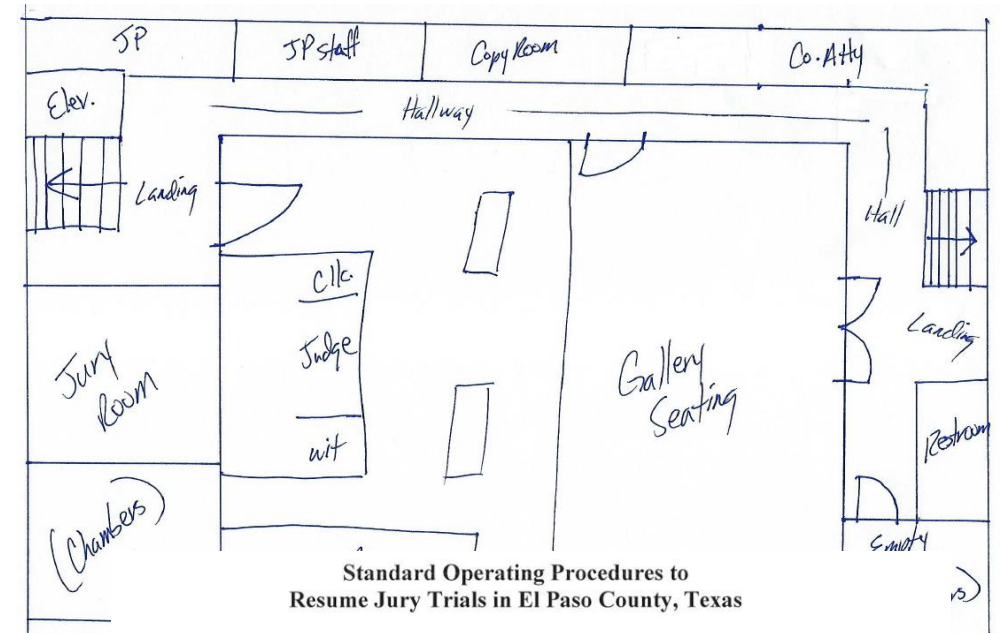


# Jury Trial Requirements

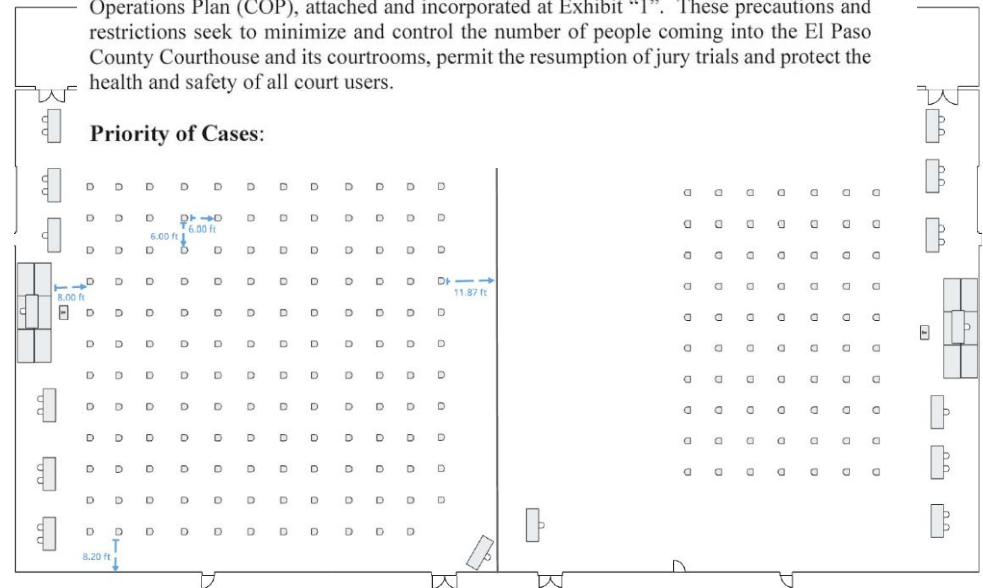
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- In-person juries limited to district/county courts between 10/1-12/1
- Motions/objections heard on record
- Virtual jury trials permitted, waiver/consent required in jailable criminal cases
- County plans required by LADJ
- Approval of trials by LADJ/RPJ
- Consult with local health dept before trial



*Iric*  
*Z* The Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) implement recommended health and safety measures and comply with the Emergency Orders of the Texas Supreme Court and the Court of Criminal Appeals, and the directives of the Office of Court Administration and El Paso County Council of Judges, including the El Paso County Council of Judges Court Operations Plan (COP), attached and incorporated at Exhibit "1". These precautions and restrictions seek to minimize and control the number of people coming into the El Paso County Courthouse and its courtrooms, permit the resumption of jury trials and protect the health and safety of all court users.





# Jury Trial Guidance – Plan Requirements

- Summons
- Locations
- Screening
- Face Coverings
- Social Distancing
- Alternates
- Courtroom arrangement
- Microphones
- Exhibits/evidence
- Vulnerable witnesses
- Food
- Cleaning





Questions?