



COVID-19

THE PANDEMIC AND THE PRACTICE OF LAW

PBA JOINT TASK FORCE ON
THE CONTINUITY OF
DELIVERY OF LEGAL
SERVICES

TASK FORCE TOP 10 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Any declaration of emergency that suspends all but essential services must recognize that legal services are indeed “essential.”

TASK FORCE TOP 10 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Second, there must be forceful statewide leadership that enforces health and safety standards uniformly and consistently on a statewide basis.

TASK FORCE TOP 10 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Third, a joint task force involving the legislature, the courts, the organized Bar, and the general public should be formed to find a way to establish a uniform civil electronic case filing and case management system for Pennsylvania.

TASK FORCE TOP 10 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Fourth, funding and training must be provided so that courts and the Bar are able to leverage the tools of technology to maintain operations

TASK FORCE TOP 10 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Fifth, courts and administrative agencies should encourage remote proceedings to the greatest extent practicable, consistent with constitutional and statutory requirements.

TASK FORCE TOP 10 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Sixth, to attack the backlog in civil cases, enhanced use of arbitration, mediation, judges pro tem, special masters, and other judicial adjuncts should be encouraged.

TASK FORCE TOP 10 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Seventh, courts and county bar associations should explore options for making space and technology resources available to pro se litigants.

TASK FORCE TOP 10 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Eighth, administrative agencies and county row offices should adopt policies and procedures to enable remote proceedings and electronic processing of documents. In addition, staff should be cross-trained so that the illness of one staff member does not create a bottleneck in the processing of important work.

TASK FORCE TOP 10 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ninth, problems encountered in the family law system concerning custody and child support must be addressed so that these matters of personal significance do not languish.

TASK FORCE TOP 10 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Tenth, the PBA and PBI should offer programs on wellness and training on advance communication technologies and other electronic resources to enable the members of the Bar to adjust to the practice of law remotely. In addition, resources should be made available to deal with the stress and financial impact of judicial emergencies may have on the practice of law.