

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER OF THE
CHIEF JUDGE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

WHEREAS, New York State and the nation are now in the midst of an unprecedented public health crisis surrounding the outbreak of COVID-19 (coronavirus); and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 is known to be a highly infectious disease, and there is much community concern that large gatherings of people can result in greater public exposure to possible contagion or "community spread," and

WHEREAS, on a daily basis, in courts across the State, hundreds if not thousands of people representing a broad cross-section of the community gather to conduct business in large groups in close proximity to one another; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have recommended the cancellation or postponement of mass gatherings or "social distancing," as a precaution against exposure to COVID-19, and we have consulted high-level New York State government health experts on this subject;

NOW THEREFORE,

Pursuant to my authority as Chief Judge of the State of New York under section 28 (a) of Article VI of the State Constitution, I have determined that the trial courts of this State shall remain open to handle all essential matters and that the handling of non-essential matters will be postponed for the foreseeable future, and to enable the Judiciary to effectively preside over essential matters (to be determined for each judicial district or court by the appropriate Administrative Judge having responsibility for such judicial district or court after consultation with the Deputy Chief Administrative Judge having responsibility for such courts) as follows:

1. The Chief Administrative Judge may designate the location or locations within each county where essential matters may be heard.
2. Any matter pending in any court of the State may be transferred to Supreme Court or such other court in accordance with section 19 of Article VI of the Constitution upon a finding that such transfer will promote the administration of justice.
3. The Chief Administrative Judge may designate any eligible judge or justice as an Acting Justice of the Supreme Court or Judge of another court.
4. For purposes of this order, the Chief Judge and the Chief Administrative Judge may serve as Acting Supreme Court Justices where necessary to expedite the business of the Supreme Court;

5. This order supplements, and where appropriate supersedes, the annual orders approved by the Presiding Justices and the Chief Administrative Judge for the calendar year 2020;



Chief Judge of the State of New York

Date: March 17, 2020

AO/3/2020