

Frequently Asked Questions for Self-Represented Litigants

Attending Court Remotely

In addition to the frequently asked questions below, please see the [COVID-19 FAQs](#) answered by Michigan Legal Help.

1. How do I know if I have a hearing scheduled during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic?

The court will contact you by mail, e-mail, or phone to let you know if you have a court hearing. If you are unsure whether you have a court hearing, [contact the court](#) as soon as possible to find out.

2. If I have a hearing scheduled during the COVID-19 pandemic, should I attend the hearing?

Yes, you should attend the hearing. If you are unsure if you should attend a hearing in person, by phone, or video, please [contact the court](#). If you are unable to attend the hearing because you or a family member are ill, then you should [contact the court](#) immediately. Participants who are exhibiting symptoms of or have been exposed to the coronavirus within 14 days before their scheduled appearance should [contact the court](#) and appear remotely.

3. If I have a hearing scheduled during the COVID-19 pandemic, am I allowed to attend it remotely (from my home)?

If your case qualifies, you might be able to attend your court hearing via telephone or videoconferencing. You may provide your contact information to the court by giving them the [“Contact Information” form \(MC 505\)](#).

The court will contact you to explain how to attend the hearing. One way the court could contact you is by sending you the [“Notice of Hearing with Remote Participation” form \(MC 506\)](#).

If you have questions about how to attend the hearing, please [contact the court](#).

4. What is “videoconferencing”?

Videoconferencing is a way for people at different locations to see, hear, and talk to each other.

Courts across Michigan are allowing people to attend their court hearings using videoconferencing. The most common version of videoconferencing that courts are using is called “Zoom.” Zoom can be accessed on a home computer, a laptop, or on a smartphone. To participate using videoconferencing, you either need Internet or a data plan that allows you to view video.

5. What if I cannot attend the court hearing remotely?

If a remote hearing has been scheduled in your case, but you are unable to attend the court hearing remotely, [contact the court](#) as soon as possible to let them know. They may be able to help you find a way to attend your hearing, or they may reschedule it. If you do not have Internet access or phone service that allows you to participate, please [contact the court](#).

6. Can my case be resolved using alternative dispute resolution, such as mediation (not through the court system)?

Yes, depending on your case and location, there are several options to resolving legal issues using alternative dispute resolution.

- i. [MI-Resolve](#) is an online system for resolving disputes that are typically filed as a small-claims or landlord/tenant case (but not eviction) in the district courts. You can request that a mediator help you and the other party resolve the dispute, and the service is free. It is

currently available in 18 counties: Alcona, Alpena, Cheboygan, Crawford, Huron, Iosco, Kalkaska, Lapeer, Macomb, Montmorency, Oakland, Presque Isle, Oscoda, Otsego, Sanilac, St. Clair, Tuscola, and Wayne. In addition, Marquette and Charlevoix counties should be up and running soon.

- a. For additional information and to request a mediator, click [here](#) and select your county.
- ii. Community Dispute Resolution Program centers statewide are open to mediate by videoconferencing, such as Zoom.
 - a. For additional information and to find a Community Dispute Resolution Program center, click [here](#) and select your county.
- iii. Online services for resolving a variety of matters are available in 27 district courts. The types of matters that may be available for online resolution include Traffic and Civil Infraction Violations, Misdemeanor Pleas, Past Due Amounts Owed, and/or Parking Violations. These district courts are located in the following counties: Bay, Calhoun, Clinton, Gratiot, Ingham, Jackson, Kent, Macomb, Monroe, Muskegon, Oakland, Ottawa, Washtenaw, and Wayne Counties.
 - a. For additional information and assistance, click [here](#), go to “Michigan,” and click on the court where your case is located. Or go to your court’s webpage and find the link to their online dispute resolution program.

7. How do I use Zoom videoconferencing?

For instructions about using Zoom, click [here](#). It includes a step-by-step process, a video tutorial, and screenshots. Click [here](#) for additional information or visit [Michigan Legal Help](#) for more help.

8. Can I still file a new case or file something in an existing case during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Yes. Some courts are accepting in-person filings, while others are accepting filings by mail, e-Filing, e-mail, or fax. [Contact the court](#) to find out how you can file a case.

9. If I have any questions about attending my court hearings remotely, who do I contact?

If you have any questions about attending your court hearings remotely, [contact the court](#) to find out what to do.

10. If my court hearing is conducted remotely, will it still be open to the public?

Yes. Access to most remote court proceedings must be available to the public either during the hearing or immediately after the hearing. Many courts have created YouTube channels and are livestreaming court hearings as they occur. Click [here](#) for the courts that have active live-stream hearing capabilities.

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