



MICHIGAN COURTS NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Court Allows Additional Six Months to Implement Orders Regarding Personal Identifying Information

LANSING, MI, June 30, 2021 – As part of a long-term strategy to both protect the public and provide additional access to court records, the Michigan Supreme Court and State Court Administrative Office (SCAO) have been focused on improving how Michigan courts handle personal identifying information (PII). More than two years ago, the Court approved revisions of court rules to protect PII; however, the Court decided [today](#) that an additional six months are needed to complete reprogramming of court computer systems and to enable courts and users to implement necessary revisions in their practices to accommodate the new rules.

“Courts have an obligation to protect personal identifying information so that individuals named in court proceedings are not exposed to identity theft or other threats. However, we also have an obligation to make sure that the implementation process gives courts and other stakeholders enough time to make these changes without disrupting service to the public,” said State Court Administrator Tom Boyd. “Once these rule changes are implemented, by protecting personal information, we not only protect the public, we also lay the foundation for a dramatic increase in public access to court files.”

PII are defined as date of birth, Social Security number, driver’s license number, passport number, or financial account information. In May 2019, the Michigan Supreme Court published for comment and then adopted various [rule revisions of MCR 1.109 and MCR 8.119](#) that prohibit filers from including PII on court forms unless it is necessary for the particular proceedings, and instead require they file a separate document that includes the protected information. By rule, those documents would be nonpublic. [Additional rule revisions](#) to clarify the 2019 order were proposed in October 2020, discussed at public administrative hearing in March 2021, and recently approved by the Court. These revisions make it clear that court clerks do not have to redact PII in forms filed with the court either before or after July 1, 2021 prior to providing them to the public. Today’s decision moves the deadline for implementation to January 1, 2022.

As part of the overall records management strategy, SCAO has undertaken a massive project to revise SCAO-approved court forms to protect against inappropriate disclosure of personal identifying information (PII) in court records. As part of that process, [over 200 court forms were identified and modified](#), and SCAO notified judges and courts of the changes made to existing court forms and how the changes will help to protect PII. In addition, as courts transition to statewide e-filing, SCAO is programming computer systems to protect PII. Local courts are also updating their computer systems. Ultimately, protecting PII will allow for a dramatic expansion of public access to court files as e-filing is expanded to additional courts statewide over the next several years. Without such protection, public access will be severely limited.

Individuals being screened for employment, housing, or other purposes, can give consent to allow access to their date of birth or other PII. Find more information at courts.mi.gov/PII.

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