

# Cass County Courts



## Changes to Landlord/Tenant case processing during COVID-19

**Cassopolis, Michigan, February 2, 2021** – The Cass County Courts have received guidance from the Michigan Supreme Court about priority treatment and new procedures for landlord tenant cases.

The full order can be found at:

[https://courts.michigan.gov/Courts/MichiganSupremeCourt/rules/court-rules-admin-matters/Administrative%20Orders/2020-08\\_2021-01-30\\_FormattedOrder\\_AmendtAO2020-17.pdf](https://courts.michigan.gov/Courts/MichiganSupremeCourt/rules/court-rules-admin-matters/Administrative%20Orders/2020-08_2021-01-30_FormattedOrder_AmendtAO2020-17.pdf)

Since the early days of the pandemic, state and national authorities have imposed restrictions on the filing of many landlord/tenant cases. As those restrictions are lifted and courts return to full capacity and reopen facilities to the public, many will experience a large influx of landlord/tenant case filings. Restrictions will be in place in the Cass County Courts over the coming weeks and months as a way to limit the possibility of transmission of COVID-19. In addition, courts are required to comply with a phased expansion of operations, which also imposes limits on the number of individuals that may congregate in public court spaces.

The Michigan Supreme Court has directed all Courts in Michigan to process landlord/tenant cases using a prioritization approach. This approach will help limit the possibility of further infection while ensuring that landlord/tenant cases are able to be filed and adjudicated efficiently following policy guidelines established by the State Court Administrative Office.

“Courts must balance the priorities of due process of law with safety for all,” said Chief Probate Judge Susan L. Dobrich. “The Cass Courts will continue to follow guidance from the Michigan Supreme Court, the CDC, and the local health department as we continue to move through the COVID-19 pandemic.”

The Michigan Supreme Court’s newest order requires all Courts to inform parties of the right to obtain counsel, about the availability of rental assistance, and that a judgement is not necessary for a defendant to receive assistance. Parties must also be advised that mediators are available to help resolve cases and that issuing of a Conditional Dismissal is a possible outcome.

Resources are available to assist in utility and rental payments, which include Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and Keystone Place, the local Housing Assessment and Resource Agency for Cass County. Monies will be available through the Michigan State Housing Development Authority, pursuant to the COVID Emergency Rental Assistance (CERA) program as soon as the funds are appropriated by the Michigan Legislature.