



**FY2019 RECOMMENDATION/FY19-PR10 Create a Statewide Court Date Reminder System [Statutory]**

**Status:** Implementation Complete

**Actions/Updates**

**2019 UPDATE**

Senate Bill 2019-036 (State Court Administrator Reminder Program; sponsors, Sens. Lee & Cooke and Reps. Benavidez & Carver) was introduced 1/4/2019 and was signed by the Governor May 29, 2019. Although not initiated by CCJJ, the bill addresses the development of a court date reminder system. The system must be implemented by the State Court Administrator by July 1, 2020.

With the passage and signing of this bill, this recommendation is considered complete.

**2018 UPDATE**

This recommendation requires statutory change. The recommendation was approved by the Commission on November 9, 2018 and is first applicable for action during the FY 2019 legislative session.

**Description**

Amend 13-3-101(11), C.R.S., to require that on or before July 1, 2020, the state court administrator shall develop and manage a statewide court date reminder system that:

- reminds criminal defendants to appear for their scheduled court hearings in the county and district courts of the state (Note: Denver County and Municipal Courts may be excluded from this requirement.), and
- includes a convenient and regular process to update defendant contact information and provide multiple contact options with the capability to reach all defendants using current (for example, reminders sent by text, email, and/or phone call) and emerging technologies.

**Agencies Responsible**

Office of the State Court Administrator (SCAO)

**Discussion**

Several jurisdictions across the country and in Colorado have adopted a court date reminder process. Court reminders are widely regarded as a research-informed pretrial practice that can increase court appearance rates. The use of court date reminders is included in both the ABA

Standards for Criminal Justice-Pretrial Release [Standard 10-1.10(k)] [Footnote: 1] and the NAPSA Standards on Pretrial Release [Standard 3.5(a)(vi)]. [Footnote: 2]

A summary of the reasons to provide reminder notices is offered by the Pretrial Justice Center for Courts in Pretrial Justice Brief #10: Use of Court Date Reminder Notices to Improve Court Appearance Rates:[Footnote: 3]

“Notification systems are commonly used in health and service industries to remind patients or clients of upcoming appointments or payment due dates. It is one example of a behavioral intervention strategy that can help to improve compliance and reduce waste of system resources. This approach has been similarly adapted for use in various justice system settings (e.g., with defendants to remind them of court appearance or payment due dates; with jurors to remind them of their upcoming jury service).

[The Proposed Statutory Language may be found in the related "Recommendation Text."]

When used at the pretrial stage, notification systems may help to improve the court appearance rates of defendants, thereby reducing the community and court costs associated with missed hearings. When defendants fail to appear in court, arrest warrants must be issued and served, defendants may serve more jail time, docket sizes increase, workloads increase for justice system professionals, and an additional burden may be placed on victims and witnesses. Interventions that decrease failure-to-appear (FTA) rates may therefore provide a multi-layered budget-saving measure for courts. They may also help to improve perceptions of justice system fairness by avoiding the need to impose potentially harmful penalties (such as jail time) on defendants, who otherwise may have unintentionally missed their scheduled court date. The National Institute of Corrections cites court date notification as an effective pretrial supervision practice in, A Framework for Pretrial Justice: Essential Elements of an Effective Pretrial System and Agency.”[Footnote: 4]

## Footnotes

[1] American Bar Association. (2007). ABA Standards for Criminal Justice: Pretrial Release (3rd Ed.). Washington, D.C.: ABA. (See, [americanbar.org/groups/criminal\\_justice/publications/criminal\\_justice\\_section\\_archive/crimjust\\_standards\\_pretrialrelease\\_toc/](http://americanbar.org/groups/criminal_justice/publications/criminal_justice_section_archive/crimjust_standards_pretrialrelease_toc/))

[2] National Association of Pretrial Services Agencies. (2004). Standards on Pretrial Release (3rd Ed.). Washington, D.C.: NAPSA. (See, [napsa.org/eweb/DynamicPage.aspx?Site=NAPSA&WebCode=standards](http://napsa.org/eweb/DynamicPage.aspx?Site=NAPSA&WebCode=standards))

[3] Elek, J., Sapia, S., & Keilitz, S. (2017). Pretrial Justice Brief #10: Use of Court Date Reminder Notices to Improve Court Appearance Rates. Williamsburg, VA: National Center for State Courts- Pretrial Justice Center for Courts. (See, [ncsc.org/Microsites/PJCC/Home/Pretrial-Justice-Briefs.aspx](http://ncsc.org/Microsites/PJCC/Home/Pretrial-Justice-Briefs.aspx))

[4] Pilnik, L. (2017). A Framework for Pretrial Justice: Essential Elements of an Effective Pretrial System and Agency. Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Corrections. (See, [nicic.gov/framework-pretrial-justice-essential-elements-effective-pretrial-system-and-agency](https://www.nicic.gov/framework-pretrial-justice-essential-elements-effective-pretrial-system-and-agency))