

BJA Court Recovery Task Force Guiding Principles

The Task Force:

1. Shall prioritize the fair, efficient, and safe provision of court services that fulfill constitutional and statutory mandates to protect individual liberties, guarantees, and freedoms.
2. Shall promote and support legal and policy reforms that advance race equity & racial justice, including identifying actions that transcend traditional divisions between the civil, criminal, and juvenile justice systems to eliminate systemic racism.
3. Shall develop plans and proposals that address access to justice for all despite physical, language, or financial barriers, including tools to assist unrepresented parties.
4. Shall work with judicial branch stakeholders and coordinate with the other branches of government, state and local, to follow constitutional and statutory mandates that place a priority on deadlines to resolve certain types of cases.
5. Shall understand that Washington is not a unified court system and individual courts have varying needs, resources, and timetables. Consequently, a statewide solution that allows flexibility for specific measures and implementation timing is important to the recovery process.
6. Shall encourage courts to continue to use and, where appropriate, expand technology of all types to facilitate alternatives to face-to-face hearings in open court that contribute to a high density of people in courthouses, while maintaining access to justice in the face of inequitable access to technology.
7. Shall encourage courts to continue to identify innovative ways to expand capacity and ensure social distancing to safely meet the needs of the courts, court staff, and members of the public.
8. Shall collect available data and feedback from various stakeholders to inform decision-making and identify ongoing data needs for assessing performance.