



NEW JERSEY STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

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Honorable Glenn A. Grant, J.A.D.
Acting Administrative Director of the Courts
R.J. Hughes Justice Complex
25 W. Market Street
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

Re: Use of the Judiciary Electronic Document Submission (JEDS) system
in Family Part Matters

Dear Judge Grant:

Thank you for your continued attention to matters affecting the attorneys of our state and the focus that you are providing on COVID-19-related issues.

I am writing regarding the recently-expanded Judiciary Electronic Document Submission (JEDS) program, which enables, for the first time, electronic filing of pleadings in the Chancery Division – Family Part. We are very pleased this is moving forward, particularly now, as the elimination of the need for the submission of physical documents will help to protect the safety of attorneys, judges, and the public at large during this time. The NJSBA appreciates these proactive steps being taken by the Court.

We are also grateful for the Court's willingness to work with the NJSBA to provide training on the new system and include other technical advice to attorneys about interacting virtually with the court system. That should go a long way to facilitating the proper use of JEDS and other platforms.

Beyond the training, however, there are a few issues for which clarification is sought in connection with JEDS and its use in family part matters. Specifically, it is unclear whether use of the JEDS system is mandatory or permissive. If the use is permissive, additional information is needed. For example, if one party submits their filing electronically using e-Courts, while the other party submits their pleading non-electronically, there is the potential for the matter to appear as "unopposed" in the computer system. This situation would also occur if an attorney is required to submit their pleadings via JEDS, but a self-represented litigant is not. This confusion could be exacerbated with court personnel and law firm staff working remotely and experiencing delays in receiving paper submissions. Given the number of self-represented litigants who appear in the Family Part, it will be important for the Court to clarify how such a situation would be addressed to avoid additional unnecessary filings.

Additionally, there are questions about how confidential documents should be handled. The JEDS website indicates that users are not to upload confidential documents, but under R. 1:38-3(d), many of the documents that are commonly filed in Family Part matters are to be excluded from public access. This includes the routine Case Information Statements and financial statements in summary support actions. Guidance is requested about how those types of documents should be filed both by attorneys and by self-represented litigants.

Again, the NJSBA appreciates the opportunity to work together to keep the judicial system functioning as seamlessly and efficiently as possible. We look forward to coordinating training sessions to assist users in navigating through a virtual court system, and we hope you are able to provide clarification on the additional issues raised above.

Thank you again for your continued courtesies, cooperation and consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Evelyn Padin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Evelyn Padin, Esq.
President

cc: Kimberly A. Yonta, Esq., NJSBA President-Elect
Angela C. Scheck, NJSBA Executive Director