

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 6, 2021

**Judicial Information Center team receives Governor's Award
for efficiency and innovation**

On May 6, 2021 in an online ceremony, Gov. John Carney recognized the COVID response team from the Delaware Courts' Judicial Information Center (JIC) for delivering "innovative, impactful, sustainable, and highly efficient business processes and services" during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The team of 16 received the GEAR P3 Innovation and Efficiency Award and was honored by the Governor as a team that "will serve as clear role models for other organizations" in the state.

"I am proud of our JIC team and what they accomplished during this challenging and difficult year for the Delaware Judicial Branch. I know I speak for everyone in not only the Judicial Branch but the entire justice system when I say this award was well-earned and well-deserved," said Chief Justice Collins J. Seitz, Jr. "This team allowed our justice system to continue to function safely during the pandemic. JIC provided us with tools, solutions and processes that we will continue to use long after this pandemic ends."

Led by Deputy State Court Administrator/Information Systems Manager Kenneth Kelemen, the members of the award-winning team are: James Weister, Kevin Bowers, Amy Whitman, John Williams, Saoud Khan, Christopher Minner, Shawn Facen-Simmons, James Cole, Ann Hsu, Ryan Fontello, Christopher Talley, Angel Morales, Stephen Spalluto, Edward Hall, Wade Heverin and Karen Puckham.

At the outset of the pandemic, JIC became a centerpiece of the Delaware Judiciary's efforts to keep court operations going during the pandemic. JIC responded by mobilizing a response team to assess the varying IT needs of every court in every county and then procured and deployed resources statewide. JIC also facilitated remote access for court employees, tested the security and sufficiency of different remote solutions, and then provided training and technical support for court staff. The JIC team also created more than a dozen webpages, for both judicial branch employees and the public, to provide status updates on court operations and access to new policies and procedures that were implemented to deal with the pandemic and to provide access to new online forms to ensure continued court access.

As a part of this massive effort, JIC secured licenses for 226 users of the online video conferencing platform Zoom and 4 licensed webinar accounts. The Zoom webinar licenses allowed Chief Justice Seitz and Dr. Alfred Bacon to hold multiple town hall meetings over the past year with court employees and justice system partners to communicate critical information about Judicial Branch operations and COVID planning in a timely and effective way.

Hand-in-hand with the Zoom access, JIC procured and installed equipment in courtrooms and offices to facilitate over 33,000 virtual hearings, meetings and remote trials between April 1,

2020 and April 1, 2021 that provided the backbone of court operations during the pandemic. One of the team's most innovative solutions involved PCs and video equipment mounted on small carts that could be moved -- from courtroom to courtroom and moved from place to place in that courtroom -- as needed. Ultimately, JIC was able to deploy 43 of these video carts across the state between May and December 2020, allowing remote access in 75 courtrooms across each of Delaware's six courts in 24 different buildings. The team was so successful in helping the Courts transition to video that the Court of Chancery, the nation's premiere court for resolving business disputes, was able to use for remote proceedings without a significant backlog or delay. The use of video also allowed other courts to move forward with critical and urgent hearings and proceedings.