

# Broadband and the Courts

Broadband is becoming as necessary to the justice system as the physical courthouse.

## Overview

Technology was previously considered a nonessential convenience for courtrooms and justice related activities. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in courts turning to remote technology to meet the needs of the public, making it essential. The altered operations require different resources for the courthouse and the consumer of the services provided in a courthouse.

Access is the cornerstone of a fair and equitable justice system. As technology is becoming an evident part of the solution, policy and decisionmakers must work to close the gap between consumers that have ready access to the internet and those that do not.

## Opportunities

**Rural communities** face the largest deficits with technology but stand to benefit the most by accessing court and treatment services through remote technology and broadening the provider network of social supports. Transportation barriers known to rural communities can be overcome by increasing consumers' access to technology.

communities to get **access to treatment services** that previously would not be available.

Substance use is a large contributor to court demand and courts have a long history of partnering with addiction treatment providers to support interventions. Many areas lack the providers to meet the demand. Remote technology allows for new opportunities for the underserved

The introduction of remote technology will **increase efficiency** of the courts. These efficiencies can be measured through time savings of court personnel and consumers. Cost savings to the courthouse consumer can be measured through reduction in transportation-related costs, child care, and time away from work. Additional cost savings can be found through changing staffing patterns required for full public in-person court business.

## Demonstration of Use

- ▶ Hybrid Court models
- ▶ Virtual arraignment in criminal court
- ▶ Virtual hearings for abuse prevention orders
- ▶ Remote clinical assessment
- ▶ Pretrial conferences
- ▶ Civil court hearings (e.g. divorce, child custody)
- ▶ Remote probation contacts

