

# You've got mail court

## New CPCMS feature sends court date reminders via email



In a statewide effort to help reduce the number of missed court appearances, AOPC/IT recently added a new “E Communications” feature to the Common Pleas Case Management System (CPCMS) – allowing all judicial districts the ability to send email reminders to participants in upcoming criminal cases.

Similar functionality has been used in other state court systems where it's been shown to increase compliance in court attendance and decrease the number of failure-to-appear warrants issued.

Currently, electronic notifications will only be sent via email – however in the near future, the functionality will be enhanced to accommodate text messages.

E Communications is available as a controlled rollout to any county court office that confirms their interest with AOPC.

For more information please contact the [CPCMS Help Desk](#). [AOPC](#)

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## PA participates in virtual adoption initiative roundtable

### The growing focus on kinship care

Earlier this fall, Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice **Max Baer** and Office of Children and Families in the Courts Director **Sandy Moore** spoke at the Health and Human Services (HHS) Region III Virtual Adoption Initiative Roundtable.

Leading the Pennsylvania panel focused on permanency and kinship, they spoke to over 40 members of the executive coordinating council adoption roundtable for Region III – which encompasses Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Delaware, Pennsylvania and District of Columbia.

Justice Baer, speaking from his own experiences in dependency court, offered insight into how the discussion around kinship has evolved. He gave a down-to-earth assessment of where the courts used to stand, and where they need to go in terms of supporting and relying on kin.

“There was this unthoughtful bias to some extent against grandparents, grandmothers in particular, Justice Baer said.

“The argument that was once made to me in the early 90’s was that the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree – so if

mom is dysfunctional, grandma is the one who raised her. Well that is wrong ...that presumption that relatives are going to serve by the same malady is just fundamentally incorrect and wrong.”

He explained why and how that thinking has changed over the last 30 years. Like many other issues, as societal views began to change, so did many of the laws and policies surrounding dependency.

Today in Pennsylvania, Justice Baer explained, every possible attempt is made to not remove a child from their home or family – and if that is not possible, then the placement focus shifts to finding a trusted loved one in the child’s community who will take care of them.

“As soon as a child is in trouble and [OCFC] gets that call from the police or the hospital, we immediately start looking everywhere for kin. We look for the grandma, the aunt, the uncle... but we also look around for community kin. That’s the church member, the neighbor or the coach, who will take care of the child so they don’t have to leave their schools, or leave their

siblings or their communities,” Justice Baer said.

Sandy then spoke about the process they use to find those people explaining, “Our Family-Finding laws and process allow us to look for kin, including that community kin, to help create supportive networks around a child and that family.... We have to turn to our communities and bring them in to care for their children, and our experience in Pennsylvania is that when you reach out to these people, they are more than willing to be part of the solution for these children and families.

“There are only a handful of states that require this practice and Pennsylvania, by comparison, probably has the most comprehensive Family Finding law in the country.”

The passionate knowledge that Justice Baer and Sandy spoke with clearly reverberated with the roundtable members on the call, who can now share Pennsylvania’s approach to kinship with the courts and related dependency organizations in their states. [AOPC](#)