



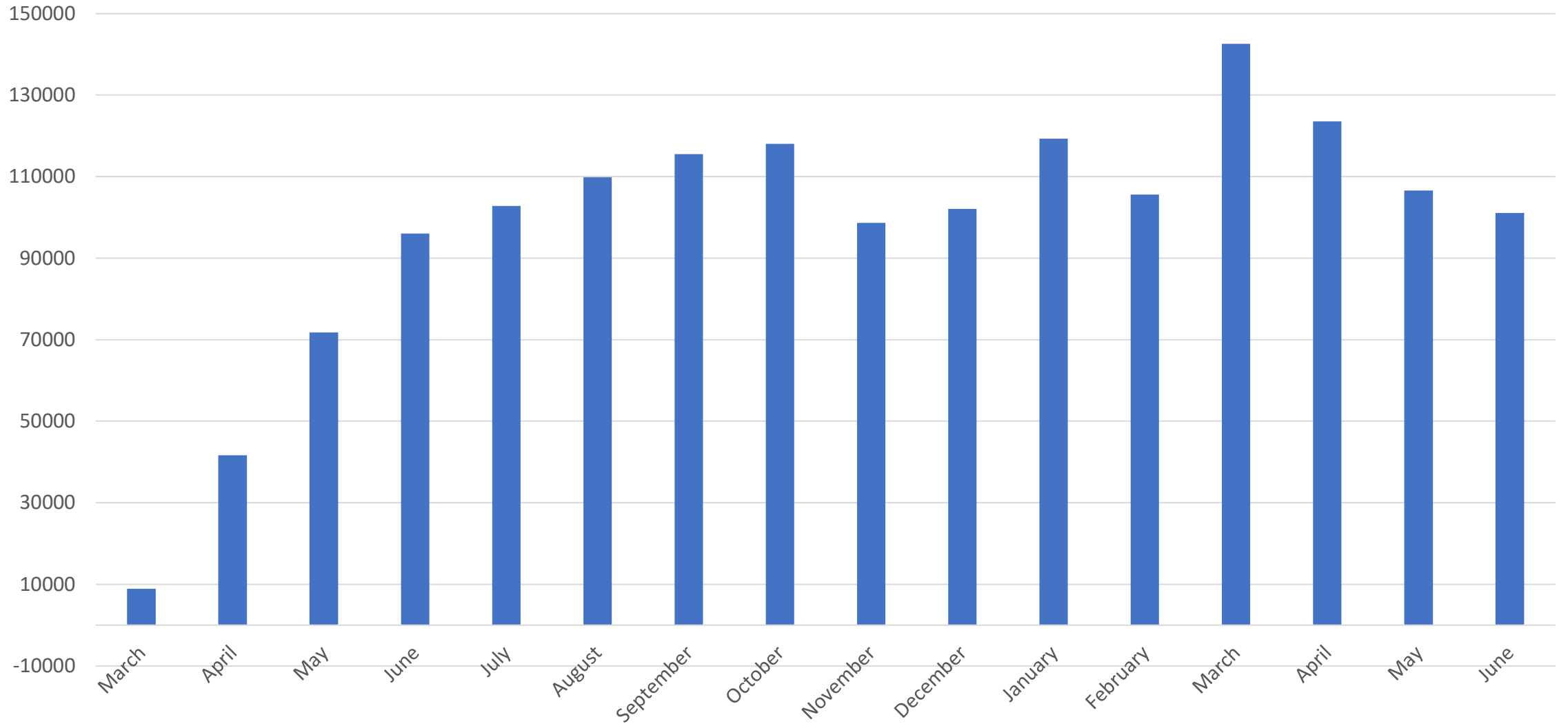
Jury Trials During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Judiciary's Response to COVID-19

- March 12 – OCA recommends suspending to 4/1 – pushed to 6/1
- March 13 – Emerg Order #1 Issued - Remote Hearings Authorized
- March 24 – Courts start using Zoom licenses
- May 4 – Guidance for In-Person Hearings issued
- May 8 – First fully virtual jury trial
- May 27 – Jury trials prohibited through 8/1 – pushed to 10/1
- June 18 – First In-Person jury trial
- August 28 – OCA report on jury trials issued
- Sept 18 – Emerg Order #26 Issued – Jury Trials Permitted on 10/1 for district/county courts with certain criteria – pushed to 4/1/21
- March 5 – All courts permitted to resume jury trials



Remote Hearings During the Pandemic



Jury Trials April 2020 to July 2021

186 trials/week

0.50% of
dispositions

383 District and County Court

213 Justice Court Civil

2,183 Total Across ALL Case Types

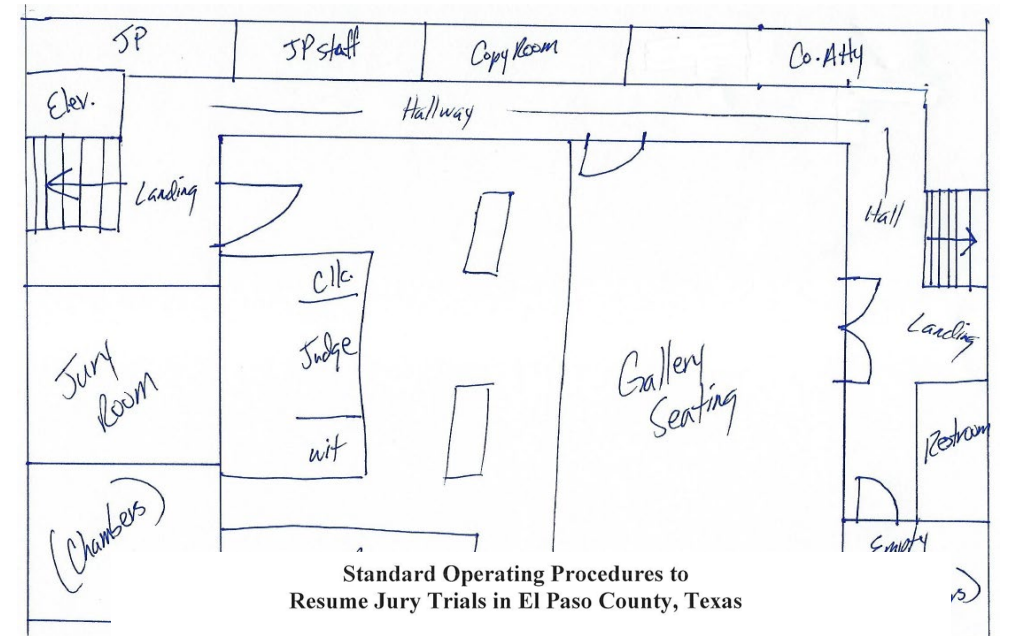
Typical year would have seen almost 13,000
jury trials



Jury Trial Requirements

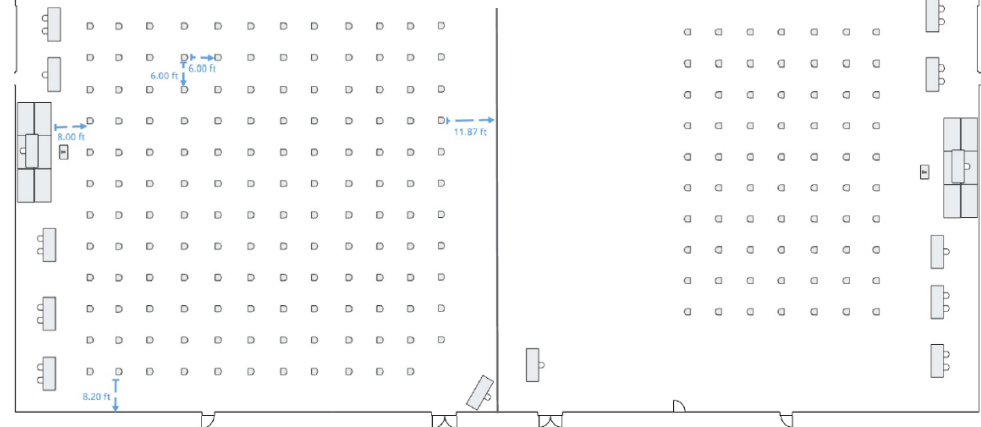


- No jury trials March 2020-May 2020
- Limited jury trials during June 2020-September 2020
- In-person juries limited to district/county courts between 10/1/20-4/1/21
- County plans required by LADJ
- Approval of trials by LADJ/RPJ
- Consult with local health dept before trial
- Motions/objections heard on record
- Virtual jury trials permitted, waiver/consent required in jailable criminal cases



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Z The Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) implement recommended health and safety measures and comply with the Emergency Orders of the Texas Supreme Court and the Court of Criminal Appeals, and the directives of the Office of Court Administration and El Paso County Council of Judges, including the El Paso County Council of Judges Court Operations Plan (COP), attached and incorporated at Exhibit "1". These precautions and restrictions seek to minimize and control the number of people coming into the El Paso County Courthouse and its courtrooms, permit the resumption of jury trials and protect the health and safety of all court users.

Priority of Cases:



Jury Trial Guidance – Plan Requirements

- Summons
- Locations
- Screening
- Face Coverings
- Social Distancing
- Alternates
- Courtroom arrangement
- Microphones
- Exhibits/evidence
- Vulnerable witnesses
- Food
- Cleaning



Virtual Jury Trials

Over 75 conducted; close to 50 virtual grand juries

Summons – remote juror questionnaire

Technology to prospective jurors

Early Check-In

Technology Bailiff



JURY TRIALS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC