

CIC Survey Results Fact Sheet

In February 2021, the Ninth Circuit's Ad-Hoc Committee for Cameras in the Courtrooms sent a survey to 39 chief district, chief bankruptcy and chief magistrate judges in the Ninth Circuit, referred to collectively here as chief judges, to determine to what extent the courts under their jurisdiction were using remote contact to hold proceedings. The results show overwhelmingly that courts are using remote or hybrid meetings to expedite court business. Here is a breakdown of the results.

- 96%, or 25 out of 26 courts responding said they are holding hearings, trials or other proceedings using an audio, video or hybrid platform. A hybrid platform includes in-person appearances by some of the parties, or the use of two or more technologies in one proceeding.
- 83%, 20 courts, use Zoom for video and or audio access, and 71% use AT&T Group Calls for audio access. 29% use Microsoft Teams, which works for both video and audio only, so there is some alternating between platforms to achieve the best results.
- When asked which platforms worked best for them, 83% again named Zoom, while 11 respondents, 46%, said AT&T Group Calls has worked best, again showing judges are choosing the platform that best suits each hearing.
- The most common proceedings held using remote access are civil pre- and post-trial hearings with 79% – 19 respondents agreeing. Judicial settlements came in at 70%, and both kinds of criminal hearings, both in and out of custody were noted as being held by 54% of respondents—13 courts.
- The success courts are having keeping the flow of justice going is reflected in the satisfaction of the press and public. 86% of chief judges responding for their courts reported no complaints from those groups on remote hearings. On the contrary, nearly half of respondents noted they had received positive feedback on remote hearings.
- No new technology is problem free and, despite the overall success of remote proceedings, glitches did pop up, including poor internet connections or bandwidth (the ability of the service to carry a volume of data at a given moment), 61%; audio or video freezing mid-meeting, 48%. 57% reported other issues including lack of access to technology by parties, AT&T operators mistakenly muting judges and a number of issues related to defendants accessing the hearing while in custody.
- When asked what went well, 91% of courts responded that technology worked well, 95% said person-to-person physical contact was minimized and 81% of responding courts said participants feel comfortable with the process.
- 95% of courts noted that their court IT personnel provided all the support, with only 4% –1 respondent—utilizing AO support.