

In the Iowa Supreme Court

CLERK SUPREME COURT

Request for Public Comment on)
Proposed Amendments to)
Chapter 23 of the Iowa Court) **Order**
Rules, Time Standards for)
Case Processing)

Iowa State Court Administration recommends that the supreme court adopt new case processing time standards for Iowa district courts. The proposed standards are consistent with the “Model Time Standards for State Courts” recommended by the National Center for State Courts.¹ Prior to taking further action, the supreme court seeks public comment on the proposed rules.

Currently, Iowa’s case processing time standards are stated in terms of the length of time from filing to “commencement of trial.” The vast majority of cases do not go to trial, and the time standards do not capture the actual manner in which most cases reach disposition. Consequently, it has been difficult for state court administration to measure case processing time performance of Iowa’s district courts in relation to the time standards.

The proposed time standards track the percentage of cases disposed within certain time periods from filing to “disposition.” This approach should provide clearer guidance for judges and case managers and provide the basis for developing statistical reports that more accurately measure court performance. The approach also should account for the small percentage of cases that are unusually complex, such that it is not reasonable to establish a time standard for 100% disposition of cases. Instead, the proposed time standards would establish a standard for each case type when 98% of the cases should be disposed.

The proposed amendments do not include any changes to the forms for

¹Available at <https://www.ncsc.org/Services-and-Experts/Technology-tools/~media/Files/PDF/CourtMD/Model-Time-Standards-for-State-Trial-Courts.ashx>.

implementing time standards in rule 23.5.

In November 2019, the Judicial Council endorsed the proposed time standards.

The proposed amendments to the time standards in chapter 23 of the Iowa Court Rules are provided with this order and are available on the judicial branch website at <https://www.iowacourts.gov/iowa-courts/supreme-court/orders/>. In addition, copies of the proposed amendments are available at the office of the Clerk of the Iowa Supreme Court.

The supreme court's request for public comment does not imply that the court will adopt any proposed amendment without further consideration.

Any interested organization, agency, or person may submit written comments. Comments about a proposed rule amendment must refer to the specific rule number and line number (for example, rule 23.2(c), lines 18–20) or case type involved (for example, rule 23.3, Case Type 1. Felonies). Email comments must be sent to **rules.comments@iowacourts.gov**, state **“Time Standards”** in the subject line of the email, and be sent **as an attachment to the email in Microsoft Word format**. Instead of submission by email, comments may be delivered in person or mailed to the Clerk of the Iowa Supreme Court, 1111 East Court Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa, 50319.

Any comments received may be posted on the Iowa Judicial Branch website.

The deadline for submitting comments is 4:30 p.m. on February 20, 2019.

Dated this 20th day of December, 2019.

The Iowa Supreme Court

By 

David S. Wiggins, Acting Chief Justice