

IN THE COURT OF APPEALS OF MARYLAND
ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER ON A
PILOT PROJECT ON TEXT NOTIFICATION OF COURT EVENTS

WHEREAS, The Maryland Judiciary is considering the use of Short Message Service notifications (“text notifications”) as a supplemental means of reminding defendants about upcoming hearings in order to optimize appearance rates by defendants; and

WHEREAS, It is desirable that a pilot project be established to determine the efficacy of the use of such text notifications, subject to appropriate oversight and control, to defendants who voluntarily provide their mobile device numbers in order to receive the same; and

WHEREAS, The Maryland Judiciary is considering further the use of text notifications as a supplemental means of reminding parties, counsel, victims, and witnesses about upcoming hearings in a broad variety of legal matters pending before a court; and

WHEREAS, Once a pilot project is implemented and its outcomes evaluated, the viability of broadening the scope of text notifications may be determined,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Mary Ellen Barbera, Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals and administrative head of the Judicial Branch, pursuant to the authority conferred by Article IV, § 18 of the Maryland Constitution, do hereby order this 16th day of January 2018, effective immediately:

The State Court Administrator, in coordination with the Chief Judge of the District Court of Maryland, is hereby authorized to develop and implement a Pilot Project on Text Notification of Court Events (“Pilot Project”), which shall be conducted for at least six (6)

months, absent exigent circumstances requiring a change in the design or duration; and

Further, the outcomes of the Pilot Project are to be evaluated by the Administrative Office of the Courts with a resulting report with recommendations by the State Court Administrator to the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals as to the efficacy of the Pilot Project and the feasibility, if any, of broadening the scope of such voluntary text notifications; and

Further, the State Court Administrator shall make a recommendation as to whether a referral to the Standing Committee on Rules of Practice and Procedure for preparation of a rule governing a Judiciary-wide application of text notification reminders may be necessary; and

Further, the State Court Administrator shall provide a report with recommendations no later than December 31, 2018, or three (3) months after the completion of the Pilot Project, whichever is later.

/s/ Mary Ellen Barbera
Mary Ellen Barbera
Chief Judge
Court of Appeals of Maryland

Filed: January 16, 2018

/s/ Bessie M. Decker
Bessie M. Decker
Clerk
Court of Appeals of Maryland