



*Each court listed below has a branch or location in every county of New York City.*

# New York Courts



**A message from Chief Judge Janet DiFiore:**

*Every day, New Yorkers from all walks of life turn to the courts to resolve their legal disputes. When they do, it is crucial that they have basic information about the courts, including the location of the courthouses within their communities and the types of cases handled by particular courts.*

*The court system has designed this guide to provide court users with useful information about the State trial courts. It is our hope that this outline will help New Yorkers better understand and better navigate their State courts.*

## SUPREME COURT

The Supreme Court has broad authority over all categories of cases, including civil and criminal matters. The court generally handles civil matters seeking monetary damages of more than \$25,000. It also hears cases where a party seeks to enjoin or stop certain actions by another party. The Supreme Court is the only court with the authority to address matters related to the termination of a marriage, including separation, annulment and divorce. The Criminal Term of Supreme Court handles felony matters (offenses punishable by a term of imprisonment that exceeds one year).

## CRIMINAL COURT OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

The Criminal Court of the City of New York has authority over all misdemeanors (offenses

punishable by a term of imprisonment that exceeds 15 days but does not exceed one year) and minor offenses committed within New York City. It also handles preliminary proceedings in felony matters, after which the case is transferred to the Criminal Term of the Supreme Court.

## CIVIL COURT OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

The Civil Court of the City of New York is composed of three divisions:

- the **Civil Division** (known as the Civil Court), which hears and determines civil matters seeking monetary damages up to \$25,000;
- the **Housing Part**, more commonly

known as the Housing Court, which handles residential landlord/tenant disputes; and

- the **Small Claims Court**, which hears matters involving monetary damages up to \$5,000.

## FAMILY COURT OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

The Family Court hears and determines most legal matters involving children and families, including:

- custody, visitation and guardianship
- monetary support for children, spouses and ex-spouses
- adoption
- paternity
- abuse and neglect of children
- violence among

family members

- children accused of committing crimes
- children in need of supervision

The Family Court does not handle proceedings involving separation, annulment or divorce. These matters must be brought in the Supreme Court, which has exclusive authority over such issues.

## SURROGATE'S COURT

The Surrogate's Court handles all matters relating to wills, estates and property of deceased persons. The Surrogate's Court also shares authority with the Family Court to hear adoption proceedings.

## COURT OF CLAIMS

The Court of Claims handles all civil cases seeking monetary damages from New York State. It has locations statewide, including New York County.

**1-800-COURT-NY**  
**WWW.NYCOURTS.GOV**

## Contacts:

### COUNTY CLERKS' OFFICES

The County Clerks' Offices are located within each Supreme Court building. This office is responsible for maintaining Supreme Court case records as well as many other record keeping functions, including the recording of deeds, mortgages and liens against property, and the processing of passports.

The County Clerk also serves as the Commissioner of Jurors for the county and, in this capacity, is responsible for supplying the trial courts with prospective jurors and handling related functions. Information about jury service can be obtained by calling 1-800-NYJUROR (695-8767).

### LAW LIBRARIES

A public access Law Library is available in each county of New York City for the public's use. For information about the location in your county, please check the specific court information in this brochure.

### CHILDREN'S CENTERS

Children's Centers are available in many courthouses to provide quality child care for litigants' children while litigants attend to court business. For information about locations in your county, please check the specific court information in this brochure.