

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

THE CHIEF JUDGE'S 2021 HEARING ON CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES IN NEW YORK



Monday, September 13, 2021
1:00 PM – 5:00 PM



Live Stream:
<http://nycourts.gov/ctapps/civil.html>

The Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals and the State of New York, Janet DiFiore, announces a statewide public hearing to evaluate the continuing unmet civil legal needs of low-income New Yorkers. This year's hearing will focus on the significance of accessible, publicly funded civil legal services in confronting the continuing civil justice crisis resulting from or worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath. The Chief Judge will report to the Legislature, as requested in its June 2010 Joint Resolution, on the information obtained at the hearing and on the continuing work of the New York State Permanent Commission on Access to Justice.

Chief Judge DiFiore will be joined on the hearing panel by the four Presiding Justices of the Appellate Division: Hon. Rolando T. Acosta (First Department), Hon. Hector LaSalle (Second Department), Hon. Elizabeth A. Garry (Third Department), and Hon. Gerald J. Whalen (Fourth Department), as well as the Chief Administrative Judge, Hon. Lawrence K. Marks, and the President of the New York State Bar Association, T. Andrew Brown.

About this Hearing:

The pandemic continues to impact people of color, low-income New Yorkers, and other vulnerable communities as they seek to access the civil justice system to safeguard the essentials of life, such as housing, family stability and personal safety in domestic relations, healthcare, education, or subsistence income and public benefits. This year's Public Hearing seeks information from interested and knowledgeable individuals, organizations, and other entities about recent, present, and future responses to the ongoing crisis.

Topics may include:

- The impact of Judiciary Civil Legal Services funding (JCLS) on the delivery of civil legal services and the fair and efficient administration of justice in the State courts.
- The current state and scope of the unmet need for civil legal services by low-income New Yorkers confronting legal problems.
- The need for civil legal services in Black and Brown communities that have been disproportionately impacted by systemic racism.
- The impact of a funded statutory right to counsel on meeting the civil legal needs of low-income New Yorkers.
- The importance of addressing the Digital Divide to ensure equal access to justice.
- The need for increased pro bono services, law school programs, and non-lawyer programs, including the Court Navigator Program and Legal Hand.
- New or expanded community collaborations among legal services providers, law schools, public libraries, hospitals, and clergy.
- The impact of adequate civil legal services funding on economic, social, and public health outcomes for low-income and vulnerable communities and individuals, including persons with disabilities, the elderly, veterans, and children.
- The economic benefits to individuals, communities, the courts, and the State from the provision of civil legal services where essentials of life are at stake

The Chief Judge's Hearing Panel will consider both oral statements (by invitation only) and written submissions. If you are interested in being invited to present, please send an email no later than August 20, 2021 and (1) identify the presenter and their affiliation; and (2) attach a prepared statement or detailed outline of the proposed statement, specifying which of the topics described above will be addressed. Proposed statements should be no more than ten minutes in length. Those interested in providing only a written submission may email their remarks no later than September 3, 2021. For persons not invited to present oral remarks, your proposed statement will be deemed a written submission. The New York State Permanent Commission on Access to Justice is assisting the Chief Judge in preparing for the hearing and in reporting on its results.

Please note that the Hearing Panel will not accept any comments, written or spoken, addressing details of individual litigation or comments about individual judges or attorneys.

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