

## THE CHIEF JUDGE'S 2023 HEARING ON CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES IN NEW YORK



Monday, September 18, 2023  
1:00 PM – 5:00 PM  
Court of Appeals, 20 Eagle St., Albany, NY



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

The Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals and the State of New York, Hon. Rowan D. Wilson, announces a statewide public hearing to evaluate the continuing unmet civil legal services needs in New York and to assess the level of resources necessary to meet those needs. 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 ongoing work of the New York State Permanent Commission on Access to Justice. The Chief Judge will be joined on the hearing panel by the four Presiding Justices, or their designees, of the Appellate Division: Hon. Dianne T. Renwick (First Department), Hon. Hector LaSalle (Second Department), Hon. Christine M. Clark (Third Department), and Hon. Gerald J. Whalen (Fourth Department), as well as the Chief Administrative Judge, Hon. Joseph A. Zayas, and the President of the New York State Bar Association, Richard C. Lewis.

Low-income New Yorkers and vulnerable communities continue to face serious barriers accessing the civil justice system. The end of the pandemic and its economic impact present new challenges, bringing particular issues and areas of need to the forefront. The purpose of the public hearing is to receive information and data from interested individuals, organizations, and other entities on the following issues:

- The impact of Judiciary Civil Legal Services (JCLS) funding on the delivery of civil legal services, the fair and efficient administration of justice in the State courts, and the need for additional funding.

- The current scope of unmet need for civil legal services by low-income New Yorkers confronting legal problems involving the essentials of life, and the funding necessary to provide the spectrum of effective assistance to meet those needs. Particular focus includes:
  - housing (including evictions and foreclosures);
  - consumer debt (including medical debt);
  - family stability and personal safety in domestic relations; and
  - subsistence income and public benefits (including disability benefits).
- The impact of inadequate civil legal services funding on economic, social, and public health outcomes for low-income and vulnerable communities and individuals, including persons with disabilities, persons living in poverty, 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 particular problems affecting the availability of civil legal services in rural communities and how to address them.
- The potential for reduction of unmet needs through: diversion initiatives; enhanced use of technology; expansion of pro bono services; use of nonlawyers; and simplified court procedures.

**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 September 1, 2023, (1) identifying yourself and your affiliation; and (2) attaching 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 8, 2023. 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 by 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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