
New York State Courts Access to Justice Program

**Working Toward 100% Meaningful
Access to Justice**



2016

**Report to the Chief Judge and the
Chief Administrative Judge
of the
State of New York**

New York State Courts

Access to Justice Program

2016 Report

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Our Mission: To ensure access to justice in civil and criminal matters for New Yorkers of all incomes, backgrounds and special needs, by using every resource, including self-help services, pro bono programs, and technological tools, and by securing stable and adequate non-profit and government funding for civil and criminal legal services programs.

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MESSAGE FROM JUSTICE FISHER

I am pleased to present the New York State Courts Access to Justice Program's 2016 Report to Chief Judge Janet DiFiore. The Report describes the significant advances that the Access to Justice Program has made toward providing 100% meaningful access to justice for all through multi-faceted programs and initiatives aimed at filling the justice gap.



Efforts to document the justice gap estimate that 80% of the civil legal needs of low-income Americans go unmet. Reports by our Permanent Commission on Access to Justice suggest that each year 1.8 million New Yorkers navigate our state courts without an attorney – many more never make it to the courthouse despite their need for legal redress.

Since assuming the mantle as Director of the Access to Justice Program in May 2009, I have taken a “no wrong door” approach to address the unrepresented public’s critical legal services needs. As the Parts of this Report demonstrate, effective assistance is offered at courthouses by volunteer lawyers, Court Navigators and Help Center personnel. Self-help services are utilized by unrepresented litigants over the internet via DIY Form document assembly programs and the CourtHelp website. Legal services are available outside the courthouse through community events and the Mobile Legal Help Center. There is a continuum on which different types and levels of legal assistance offered via an array of access points can effectively resolve legal matters without relying on traditional full service lawyer/client representation. Our programs provide effective assistance and information where and when litigants need it and in a format they can use.

The Access to Justice Program cannot effectively fill gaps in legal service delivery and provide meaningful access to those in need without the multitudes of dedicated volunteers, partners, friends, and judicial and non-judicial employees throughout the state who equally care about justice. I am grateful for their efforts. Moreover, I am proud of my devoted and gifted staff who join me each day in our mission to provide equal access to justice for everyone. Nothing is more essential to the constitutional mandate of the courts.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Fern A. Fisher".

Fern A. Fisher
March 2017

NYS COURTS ACCESS TO JUSTICE PROGRAM GOALS

Finding long-term solutions to chronic lack of civil legal assistance for people of low-income and modest means in New York including finding a permanent public funding stream for civil legal services.

Improving and increasing the availability of criminal defense representation to people facing criminal charges.

Gathering and reviewing statewide data on legal services delivery and needs towards increasing and improving civil and criminal legal assistance.

Coordinating efforts between courts, legal aid organizations and other legal and non-legal organizations, administrative agencies and lawmaking bodies to expand access to justice.

Analyzing, recommending and promoting proposed legislation, court rules, codes of conduct, policies and systemic changes that will open greater access to the courts.

Analyzing and addressing the collateral consequences of criminal convictions.

Fostering the development of new low-income and modest means income pro bono programs and supporting and improving the quality of existing pro bono programs both court-based, and outside the court, using lawyers, law students and other professionals.

Testing and developing delivery of legal assistance models both court-based and non-court-based, including limited scope representation delivery systems to improve and increase availability of assistance.

Expanding access to justice for unrepresented litigants by increasing the availability of self-help tools using a variety of methods including, but not limited to, technology, plain language forms and signs, and informational materials.

Providing cultural competent access to justice for litigants of diverse backgrounds and languages.

Addressing access to justice for individuals with special needs or social services needs by expanding social work and social services in the court system.

Providing more opportunities for justice via community empowerment using outreach, education and training of government officials and offices, neighborhood agencies and community members.

Fostering awareness of the needs of unrepresented litigants and litigants of diverse backgrounds and special needs and insuring high quality service by both judicial and non-judicial personnel via education, training and literature.

2016 HIGHLIGHTS

- ★ CourtHelp Website Attracts Over One Million Visitors and 38 Million Page Views
- ★ NYS DIY Forms Generate the Most Assemblies on LHI
- ★ Volunteer Lawyer for the Day Program - Housing Expands to Include Traverse and Abatement Hearings in Kings County
- ★ Ten Year Anniversary of the Family Court Volunteer Attorney Program
- ★ The GAL Program Successfully Advocates for an Increase in GAL Compensation to \$750
- ★ CourtHelp Website Expands to Include Criminal-Related Content
- ★ Twitter Passes 1,000 Followers
- ★ White Paper Published, “Creating a Successful Court-Based Program to Safeguard Access to Justice for Elderly, Mentally, and Physically Impaired Litigants at Risk for Eviction”
- ★ Westchester County Foreclosure Volunteer Lawyer for the Day Program Established
- ★ Administrative Order Signed Declaring UCS Policy Supporting and Encouraging Unbundled Legal Services
- ★ Over 11,000 Litigants Received Advice or Representation by Volunteers
- ★ 215,000 Litigants Helped in Court Help Centers

**Please read further for all of the Access to Justice Program’s
2016 accomplishments**

INTRODUCTION

As always, this annual Report describes the basics and highlights of the Access to Justice Program's initiatives, programs and services. In keeping with the 2016 theme of 100% meaningful access, the report is organized in a different format from past years with Part I: [Meaningful Access Through Court-Based Programs](#) focusing on efforts to reach litigants at the courthouse, Part II: [Meaningful Access Through Technology](#) focusing on efforts to reach litigants through technological solutions, and Part III: [Meaningful Access Through the Community](#) describing outreach efforts beyond the courthouse. Part IV: [Supporting Pro Bono by New and Experienced Attorneys](#) discusses efforts utilizing law students, law graduates, newly admitted and retired attorneys through various partnerships, initiatives, and the Attorney Emeritus Program as a key strategy to bridge the justice gap.

Parts V and VI represent two new sections to this Report. Part V: [Simplification of Forms](#) discusses the various forms that the Access to Justice Program worked on simplifying in 2016. Part VI: [Work with The Permanent Commission On Access to Justice](#) details the close work done with the Permanent Commission. Part VII: [Trainings, Presentations & Publications](#) outlines the Access to Justice Program's efforts to promote knowledge and understanding of legal information and procedures through various education efforts.

What has not changed in this year's Report is the acknowledgement that the work summarized in these Parts requires assistance from the legal services and access to justice communities, as well as many other less traditional partners. It is this reason that the Access to Justice Program continuously works to forge new alliances to work toward 100% meaningful access to justice. Of note, as detailed in Part I, a number of new large law firms and corporations were recruited to staff court-based volunteer lawyer programs, including White & Case lawyers trained to accept Guardian Ad Litem appointments in Housing Court for tenants disadvantaged due to age or disability. Also discussed in Part I is the new and novel partnership with New York University's Design for America chapter and their courthouse signage project to improve access to justice. As set forth in Part II, the Access to Justice Program worked with the American Bar Association Standing Committee on Pro Bono and the New York State Bar Association to develop an online ethics training to educate volunteer lawyers providing unbundled legal services via email with Free Legal Answers. Part III discusses a new association with the New York State Office for the Aging Legal Services Initiative and NYLAG that explored launching Mobile Legal Help Centers in the Southern Tier, Western New York and the North Country of upstate New York.

In addition to new collaborations with partners outside the court system, the Access to Justice Program also made significant accomplishments through working with other offices within the court system. As set forth in Part I, the Access to Justice Program and the Ninth Judicial District Pro Bono Committee's collaboration resulted in the establishment of the Westchester County Foreclosure Volunteer Lawyer for the Day program. Part I also mentions the reliance on the Department of Technology to create

the statewide Help Center database. Part V, discussing simplification of forms, details the Access to Justice Program's work with the New York State Court E-filing System Office on simplification of e-filing forms, the Office of Policy and Planning on foreclosure information packets and Counsel's Office on the Order of Protection. Appendix F: [Access to Justice Efforts Throughout the State](#) reports the impressive contributions that the Judicial Districts outside New York City and the New York City courts made to increase access to justice.

The numerous volunteers, partners, friends and court personnel who assisted the Access to Justice Program in 2016 are recognized throughout this Report. Part VIII of this Report entitled [Recognition](#) and the [Partners, Friends and Volunteers](#) section at the back of the Report, as well as contributions noted in Parts I through VII, read together draw a picture of the village that works to improve equal access to justice in the New York State Courts.

PART I: MEANINGFUL ACCESS THROUGH COURT-BASED PROGRAMS

The Access to Justice Program works on programs and resources to provide legal representation, assistance and information at the courthouse. As the primary hub of all case activity, the courthouse is the ideal location to offer services that assist unrepresented litigants. Going to court can be a very intimidating, bewildering and nerve-racking experience. This is especially true for anyone unfamiliar with the workings of the court system. Delivering help at the courthouse is an immediate means to address litigants' needs.

Accordingly, the Access to Justice Program devotes a significant amount of time to recruiting, training, overseeing and expanding court-based volunteer lawyer programs to assist litigants at the courthouse. In addition, free one-on-one assistance is available in many courthouses through the Court Help Centers and the Court Navigator Program. Information is provided in some courthouses through slideshows and posters to utilize courthouse walls as a low-cost method of providing information to large numbers of litigants. The Access to Justice Program also oversees programs and initiatives aimed at assisting litigants who, due to age, physical or mental impairments, financial or other limitations are unable to meaningfully avail themselves of court-based programs or self-help. The 2016 highlights of the Access to Justice Program's court-based initiatives and programs are summarized below.

COURT-BASED UNBUNDLED VOLUNTEER LAWYER PROGRAMS

Unbundled legal services, also known as limited scope, is a practice where the lawyer performs only the agreed upon tasks, rather than the whole "bundle" of the work required in traditional full service representation. Providing unbundled legal services programs enables the Access to Justice Program to assist many more litigants than would otherwise be possible with traditional full service legal representation. The programs concentrate on case types where a large volume of litigants navigate the justice system on their own. This includes family, housing, consumer debt, foreclosure and divorce cases. The outcomes in these types of cases often impact the most basic necessities of life, threatening the loss of homes and livelihoods.

The Access to Justice Program recruits, trains and supervises admitted attorneys, law graduates, and law student volunteers. All participating volunteers must attend Access to Justice Program substantive training, which includes ethics. Every training offers CLE credits in exchange for minimum volunteer hours in the program. Volunteers are also eligible to receive pro bono CLE credit for their service hours. All speakers who present at the CLE trainings are drawn from a pool of local experts and/or court staff, including judges and court attorneys who generously donate their time as presenters and panelists. CLE teaching credits are awarded to the attorneys who present. Every program has an experienced supervising attorney available on-site to oversee the

volunteers and answer questions. The training and supervision ensure the quality of the legal services provided. The supervision also extends the court's indemnity to the volunteer lawyers. See http://nycourts.gov/attorneys/volunteer/vap/pdfs/NYAG_VLPopinion.pdf. Most programs run with the assistance of partner organizations.

Unlike legal services and legal aid programs, none of the court-based volunteer programs income screen. In each program, the scope of the unbundled service is carefully explained to the litigant at the start of the meeting. The unbundled assistance provided primarily falls into three categories: advice only consultations, document preparation assistance, or limited representation in the courtroom. Advice and document preparation programs fulfill a need that court personnel cannot because court personnel must remain neutral and cannot interpret the law or recommend a specific course of action. Litigants can walk in to the courthouse without an appointment and obtain legal advice about their pending cases and learn how to proceed. This often empowers them to continue their cases on their own and makes them better prepared for court. When unrepresented litigants are assisted with document preparation the court papers produced are more complete and accurate and there is less rejection of papers.

Assistance with legal papers is one of the most requested and needed services for unrepresented litigants.

The Access to Justice Program offers unbundled representation in the courtroom through its Volunteer Lawyer for the Day (VLFD) Consumer Debt and Housing Programs. Unlike most of the advice and document preparation programs, the volunteers meet their clients for the first time on the morning of the court appearance and sign limited retainer agreements. Litigants understand that the representation begins and ends the same day. If a particular case is not resolved in a single appearance, the Programs provide representation on adjourned dates by the same volunteer or by a different volunteer depending on availability. At each appearance, the volunteer and the client execute a new retainer agreement. The volunteer lawyer also signs and files a limited notice of appearance, which is honored by the Judges that preside in the courtrooms where the VLFD Programs operate. Copies of the VLFD Programs' limited scope retainer agreements and notices of appearance can be found at <http://www.nycourts.gov/ip/nya2j/LawALaCarte/materials.shtml>.

The court-based unbundled programs greatly improve access to justice as well as court efficiency. A brief overview of the court-based unbundled program is set forth below. Additional information can be found at <http://nycourts.gov/attorneys/volunteer/vap/index.shtml>.

VOLUNTEER LAWYERS PROGRAM - CIVIL

Volunteer lawyers provide legal advice and information to unrepresented litigants with consumer debt cases, small claims cases, name change and other Civil Court matters in the Volunteer Lawyers Program (VLP) - Civil, which operates in the Civil Court Help Centers in Kings and New York Counties. The volunteers are trained to demystify the legal process for unrepresented litigants who are confused and overwhelmed. Volunteers assist with court forms and advise litigants on how best to represent themselves in court, providing unrepresented litigants with information about their legal rights and options. Many litigants in consumer debt cases have already had their bank accounts frozen and their wages garnished. In these cases, volunteers often utilize the Access to Justice Program's Consumer Debt Advocate document assembly program to prepare papers to vacate default judgments. The litigants do not sign a retainer and the volunteer lawyers do not file legal papers or represent litigants in the courtroom. Volunteer lawyers are supervised on site by experienced Help Center personnel.

"Working for the Program has made me not only a better young attorney, but a better person as well."

VLP-Civil, Volunteer Lawyer, NY Co., Oct. 2016

In 2016, the VLP - Civil operated in Kings County five days a week and in New York County on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays. More than 300 unrepresented litigants received advice and assistance from the volunteer lawyers. Twenty-four trainings were held and a total of 124 attorneys and law students were recruited and trained (see Appendix A).

The VLP - Civil maintains webpages for prospective and participating volunteers at <http://nycourts.gov/courts/nyc/civil/vlp.shtml> and for unrepresented litigants at <http://nycourts.gov/courts/nyc/civil/vlpselfrep.shtml>.

VOLUNTEER LAWYERS PROGRAM - HOUSING

The Volunteer Lawyers Program (VLP) - Housing was designed to provide free legal information and advice to owners and tenants who do not have attorneys as they represent themselves in court proceedings. The VLP - Housing program runs five days a week during regular Help Center hours in the five counties in New York City, including the Harlem Community Justice Center. Volunteers provide assistance by explaining what the court process entails, how to prepare for a court appearance in a Resolution Part, or how to handle a hearing or a trial. They also guide unrepresented litigants in preparing court forms needed to start or answer proceedings, as well as Orders to Show Cause to ask the court for appropriate relief.

"Seeking housing stability is an intensely personal and emotional experience...When I meet with people I try to empower them so they are informed of their rights and take proactive action."

VLP-Housing Volunteer Lawyer, Kings Co., Nov. 2016

In 2016, 100 new volunteers were trained. Lawyers contributed over 1,500 pro bono hours to the Program and were able to help more than 2,300 unrepresented litigants.

The VLP - Housing offered six basic prerequisite CLE training programs including two live Bridge-the-Gap sessions. There were four supplemental optional trainings held for volunteers participating in the VLFD/VLP initiatives, including a new live session on Abatement Hearings 101 and video replays of the aforementioned training as well as Legal Issues Arising out of Rent Stabilization, and Basics of the Family Eviction Prevention Supplement (FEPS) (see Appendix A).

The Program maintains webpages for prospective and participating volunteers at <http://www.nycourts.gov/COURTS/nyc/housing/vlp.shtml> and for unrepresented litigants at <http://nycourts.gov/COURTS/nyc/housing/vlpselfrep.shtml>.

VOLUNTEER ATTORNEY PROGRAM - FAMILY COURT

The Access to Justice Program oversees the Family Court's Volunteer Attorney Program (VAP). Volunteer attorneys assist with initial pleadings in support, paternity, custody, visitation, family offense and guardianship matters. The availability of such services helps reduce delays, helps ensure a more efficient and fair outcome for unrepresented litigants and empowers litigants to pursue their cases to final resolution. Given the complexity of Family Court cases and the critical rights involved, the program is important to ensure that unrepresented litigants understand their rights. Better preparedness and fewer delays motivate litigants to pursue their cases to final resolution rather than abandoning their actions in frustration and confusion as so many do.

“As the pro bono counsel at a large firm, I greatly appreciate the opportunity the Family Court Program offers our lawyers. They return from court saddened by the challenges the litigants face, yet gratified by the chance to offer concrete help at a difficult moment in the clients' lives.”

Morrison & Foerster LLP Pro Bono Counsel, NY Co., Dec. 2016

Volunteer attorneys provide assistance to unrepresented litigants in the New York City Family Court Help Centers as follows: Tuesday and Thursday in Bronx County; Tuesday and Wednesday in Kings County; Monday, Wednesday and Friday in New York County; Tuesday and Thursday in Queens County; and Monday in Richmond County. The VAP also provides legal assistance to unrepresented litigants in Ontario County via video conference one morning a week. In addition to solo practitioners, VAP participants include many large law firms that have agreed to send associates on a regular basis. These firms include Alston & Bird, LLP; Arent Fox LLP; Bank of America; Barclays; Blank Rome LLP; BNP Paribas; Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft, LLP; Citigroup; Colgate Palmolive; Cooley LLP; Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP; Debevoise & Plimpton LLP; Dechert LLP; DLA Piper LLP; Duane Morris LLP; Greenberg Traurig LLP;

HSBC Securities (USA) Inc.; Hughes Hubbard & Reed LLP; JPMorgan Chase Bank; N.A.; Kirkland Ellis LLP; Kramer Levin Naftalis & Frankel LLP; Kroub, Silbersher & Kolmykov PLLC; McCarter & English; McKinsey & Company; Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo, P.C.; Morgan, Lewis, & Bockius LLP; Morgan Stanley; Morrison Foerster LLP; Norton Rose Fulbright US LLP; Orrick; Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP; Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton, & Garrison LLP; Pfizer Inc.; Proskauer Rose LLP; Ropes & Gray LLP; Shearman & Sterling LLP; Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP & Affiliates; Stroock & Stroock & Lavan LLP; Thompson Hine LLP; UBS Wealth Management Americas; Watson, Farley & Williams LLP and White & Case LLP. In addition, Dechert LLP, Kramer Levin Naftalis & Frankel LLP, Proskauer Rose LLP, Shearman & Sterling LLP, and Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP & Affiliates generously hosted trainings at their offices for volunteers of the program.

In 2016, the VAP continued to provide assistance to unrepresented litigants outside New York City via video conference to Ontario County Family Court. Video conferences take place on Wednesday mornings through a coordination between court staff in Ontario and New York City. A Court Attorney takes care of client sign-in and intake and then the volunteer attorney conducts a video consultation from the New York County Family Court. The VAP marked its 10th anniversary assisting Family Court litigants. A celebration was held at the offices of Proskauer Rose LLP (see Part VIII: Recognition). Approximately, 2,369 litigants were assisted by 280 volunteer attorneys in the Family Court Volunteer Attorney Program in 2016. The VAP offered 11 CLE trainings (see Appendix A) and numerous additional trainings by DVD.

LUNCHTIME ASSISTANCE PROGRAM - SUPREME COURT

The Lunchtime Assistance Program was developed in 2014 in partnership with the Access to Justice Program, Brooklyn Law School, the Kings County Supreme Court and the Kings County Law Library Board of Trustees. The program is located in the Kings County Supreme Court and is open on Mondays and Fridays in the afternoon to assist unrepresented litigants when the Kings County Supreme Court Help Center is closed. Volunteer attorneys are available to provide unrepresented litigants with information about uncontested matrimonial issues, Article 78 concerns —with a focus on NYCHA, and 201-A Lien Law. In addition, volunteer attorneys advise unrepresented litigants as to how to represent themselves in court, explain rights and options and assist in filling out court forms. The majority of unrepresented litigants that utilize the services offered by the Lunchtime Assistance Program seek information regarding matrimonial issues.

“It is just so wonderful to help people who really need the help.”

*Lunchtime Assistance Program
Volunteer, Kings Co., Oct. 2016*

In 2016, the Access to Justice Program continued to support the Lunchtime Assistance Program and collaborated with Brooklyn Law School to identify ways to expand the program and attract more volunteers. Volunteers provided an estimated 160 hours and assisted more than 800 unrepresented litigants.

VOLUNTEER LAWYER FOR THE DAY PROGRAM - CONSUMER DEBT

New York City residents who have been sued in debt collection cases are overwhelmingly unrepresented by counsel and face major substantive and procedural obstacles to the fair adjudication of their cases. The defenses available to debtors can be complex and the gross disparity in representation often means that defendants never raise the majority of legitimate defenses. Many valid defenses are lost because the unrepresented often do not present evidence or understand the law. The VLFD Consumer Debt Program has a huge impact in assisting clients to favorably resolve these problems.

“The volunteer lawyer assisted every step of the way. Very thankful and appreciative of how the case turned out because of the guidance I received. Thank you so much.”

VLFD - Consumer Debt litigant, NY Co., June 2016

Civil Court consumer credit cases are particularly amenable to a lawyer for the day approach. Lawyers are able to achieve dismissals, both with and without prejudice, and settlements in approximately 55% of cases on the same day of representation. In these situations, the representation for the day is essentially equivalent to full representation. In the remainder of the cases, lawyers request discovery on behalf of clients or take other steps to both put the clients in a better position to defend themselves or at least provide clients with a better sense of their options.

The VLFD Consumer Debt Program runs four days a week in most counties and is conducted in partnership with New York County Lawyers Association - operating in the New York County Civil Court; NYLAG - operating in Bronx, Richmond and Queens County Civil Court; and the Brooklyn Bar Association's Volunteer Lawyer Program – operating in Kings County Civil Court. Services are provided in Richmond County two days a week. Partnerships with St. John's University School of Law in the Queens County Program and CUNY School of Law in the Kings and Queens County Programs have further expanded the services provided (see *infra* Law Student, Law Graduate and New Lawyer Initiatives). Judiciary Legal Services funding received by program partners enabled the program to continue its services in 2016.

In 2016, the VLFD - Consumer Debt Program offered 24 CLE training programs and recruited and trained a total of 124 volunteer attorneys and law students to provide limited representation to 3,438 unrepresented consumer debtors in the Civil Courts of Bronx, Kings, Queens, New York and Richmond Counties. Using the lowest rate per case received by local legal services organizations, at \$1,200 per case, yearly value of legal services provided by the volunteers in 2016 was in excess of \$4 million. To date, the VLFD Consumer Debt Program has assisted over 23,000 litigants. The VLFD Consumer Debt Program maintains webpages for prospective and participating volunteers at http://www.nycourts.gov/COURTS/nyc/civil/vlfd_civil.shtml

VOLUNTEER LAWYER FOR THE DAY PROGRAM - HOUSING

The Volunteer Lawyer for the Day Program helps prevent the eviction of hundreds of New Yorkers every year with the pro bono help of volunteers who step in to represent New York City rent stabilized tenants who have been sued in nonpayment proceedings. In 2016, the Program operated in Kings and New York Counties. Volunteer lawyers, law graduates and law students assist unrepresented litigants for the day in New York County on Mondays and in Kings County on Mondays and Wednesdays. In Kings County, the Program runs in partnership with CUNY School of Law's Community Legal Resource Network (CLRN) and the participation of dedicated LaunchPad for Justice Fellows, as well as other volunteers recruited and trained by the Access to Justice Program.

“[V]olunteers can make a big difference in the lives of others by helping to resolve clients’ cases, and ultimately, allowing financially needy individuals to stay in their homes and to maintain more affordable, rent-stabilized housing, and often with improved living conditions.”

VLFD - Housing Volunteer Attorney, Kings and NY Co., Nov. 2016

In nonpayment cases involving rent-stabilized apartments, which are matters the Program focuses on, tenants are overwhelmingly unrepresented by counsel. They lack a fundamental understanding of their legal rights and defenses and often fail to raise issues that should be heard in court including legitimate defenses and claims relating to repair problems or the legality of their rent. Tenants are also typically inexperienced at negotiating and unschooled in settlement procedures, which can result in detrimental consequences when they agree to bargains they cannot uphold and fail to understand the legal implications of a Stipulation of Settlement. The VLFD Housing Program has a positive impact in these cases. Litigants are taken on by the Program when the tenant comes to answer the petition in person in the Landlord-Tenant Clerk’s Office. Volunteers meet with the tenants, conduct intake and assist the tenant with the oral answer form. The Program helps these tenants by raising appropriate defenses and claims at the outset, negotiating fair agreements and avoiding the pitfalls of judgments where possible. Volunteers help tenants set themselves up to succeed in honoring settlements they can afford. In the event no agreement can be reached, the Program assists them in preparing for the trial.

Landlord-tenant proceedings in the New York City Housing Court are ideal for the lawyer for the day approach for a number of reasons. With no discovery as a right, the volunteer lawyer can read the Notice of Petition and Petition and Answer, interview the litigant and quickly ready him or her for the court appearance in the Resolution Part. Every case is calendared in a Resolution Part to see if it can be settled. The majority of cases in Housing Court are settled in the Resolution Part and matters can be resolved during a first appearance. Accordingly, the litigant may never have to go to court unrepresented. In the event the next court appearance requires preparation, the client is advised on what steps need to be taken.

While the Program was initially designed to only represent litigants during negotiations in the Resolution Part of the Housing Court, it was expanded to include the litigation of traverse hearings in 2015, and abatement hearings in 2016 in Kings County. Thirty-two volunteers were trained on how to litigate an abatement hearing with a mock hearing, along with a brief overview of the statutory and case law framework pertaining to abatement hearings. In exchange for the training, volunteers committed to represent a VLFD Program client in an abatement hearing in Kings County Housing Court within one year of the training (see Appendix A). The inclusion of the litigation of hearings had a positive impact in getting favorable and promising outcomes on the days the hearings were set to go forward and the Program's volunteers were ready to litigate in the Trial Part. In 2016, a total of five abatement hearings and two traverse hearings were scheduled to go forward and volunteers executed newly crafted retainer agreements to serve as counsel for these hearings. Three abatement hearings were adjourned to 2017. One matter was scheduled for both a traverse and an abatement and settled with a reduction in arrears. The VLFD client in the other traverse matter had conditions in the apartment and the Program was able to settle the case and secure an abatement. Volunteers were also able to settle another matter scheduled for an abatement hearing by getting the rent arrears reduced.

In 2016, the program offered nine CLE training programs including two live Bridge-the-Gap sessions as well as four supplemental CLE programs to law students, recent law graduates and admitted attorneys. A new live CLE was designed and held on Abatement Hearings 101 and video replays were offered for the aforementioned training as well as Legal Issues Arising Out of Rent Stabilization and Basics of the Family Eviction Prevention Supplement (FEPS) (see Appendix A). The approximately 193 volunteers who were trained served over 1,650 hours and helped approximately 230 litigants. The Program maintains webpages for prospective and participating volunteers at http://www.nycourts.gov/COURTS/nyc/housing/vlfd_housing.shtml.

FORECLOSURE VOLUNTEER LAWYER FOR THE DAY PROGRAM

In 2016, the Access to Justice Program assisted in launching the Westchester County Foreclosure Volunteer Lawyer for the Day Program in cooperation with the Ninth Judicial District Pro Bono Committee. The Program focuses on the drafting of pleadings and motions at various stages of a foreclosure action as well as post-judgment. The Court's Help Center pre-screens cases and schedules appointments for litigants. Litigants sign limited retainer agreements with the volunteer lawyers, who will assist the litigant with a defined task for the day. Volunteers prepare answers, affidavits in opposition to motions for orders of reference/judgment of foreclosure and sale, and Orders to Show Cause to vacate judgments and stay sale. All volunteers are supervised on site by an experienced court attorney and all volunteers are indemnified by the Program. Justice Fern A. Fisher, Director NYS Courts Access to Justice Program, Hon. Alan D. Sheinkman, Administrative Judge of the Ninth Judicial District, and Hon. Sam D. Walker, Chair of the Ninth Judicial District Pro Bono Legal Action Committee introduced the initiative at a "kick-off" event at the Westchester County

Courthouse on April 15, 2016. The Program held its first training in late June for forty volunteers. (See Appendix A.) Pepper Hamilton and Regeneron Pharmaceuticals' Corporate Counsel department have taken the lead in providing associates to staff the Program on a rotating basis. These firms have also provided paralegals to assist with intake, document review, and clerical work for the Program.

The Program assisted 18 litigants in 2016. Under the new foreclosure legislation which went into effect in December 2016, the Program's volume will likely increase as litigants who have not filed a timely answer will now be referred to the Program during their first settlement conference.

UNCONTESTED DIVORCE PROGRAM

The Access to Justice Program's Uncontested Divorce Program helps unrepresented litigants with the preparation of uncontested divorce forms at clinics in the Supreme Courts of Bronx, Kings, New York, Queens, Richmond and Westchester Counties. Thousands of New Yorkers file uncontested divorces each year without an attorney. The divorce forms and court process are complex and bewildering. The Program helps ensure that the divorce

process is simply explained and the documents that litigants submit are complete and accurately prepared. The Program recruits, trains and supervises volunteer attorneys to assist unrepresented litigants. The Access to Justice Program licenses a document assembly program that generates legal documents and simplifies the drafting process, producing personalized court forms for litigants that are ready to be served and filed in the Supreme Court. Unrepresented litigants receive free assistance from the volunteer attorneys with the preparation of all the documents required for an uncontested divorce where the parties have no children or where the parties have a current Family Court order of custody, support or visitation. Appointments are made through Court Help Centers and, if there is space, walk-ins are sent to the Program.

"The volunteer experience was very interesting, with great supervisors. I hope I will have a chance to work with the program again."

*Uncontested Divorce Program
Volunteer Lawyer, Queens
Co., Aug. 2016*

In 2016, the Uncontested Divorce Program operated on Tuesdays in New York and Queens Counties, Wednesdays in Westchester County, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays in Kings County and Thursdays (evenings) in Bronx County. In addition to attorney volunteers, CUNY law graduate fellows helped staff the Kings County and Queens County programs. The Program operated one additional day and one additional night in Queens County Supreme Court in partnership with St. John's Law School. These additional hours enabled unrepresented litigants to complete their forms after working hours. In cooperation with the Richmond County Women's Bar Association, the Richmond County Supreme Court operates the program on a periodic basis. In cooperation with the Ninth Judicial District Pro Bono Legal Action Committee, the Westchester program expanded to include preparation of child support/custody/access stipulations and the incorporation of existing Family Court

orders, thereby being able to serve litigants with children in uncontested divorce matters.

In 2016, the Uncontested Divorce Program conducted 14 trainings and trained 144 attorneys and law students who were recruited to provide assistance to unrepresented litigants. A total of 1,936 unrepresented litigants were assisted with their uncontested divorce proceedings.

COURT HELP CENTERS

Each and every day, unrepresented litigants must learn to not only navigate the complexities of the law that govern the type of case they have but also to navigate the courthouse that they enter. A Help Center is a neutral place located in or near the courthouse, where unrepresented litigants can walk in without an appointment and obtain in-person legal and procedural information from trained court personnel, court forms, sample packets, and referrals to better assist them with the preparation of their cases. Many Help Centers offer additional services, such as, internet for legal research, access to DIY Form programs, and consultations with volunteer attorneys. New York State Court Help Centers do not income screen and, for some litigants, it is the only place to turn for information. The Court Help Centers greatly increase access to justice for Help Center visitors.



Court Help Centers also significantly improve court efficiency. When court users are empowered with legal tools, confidence and information they are better prepared to continue with their cases on their own. In turn, judges, court attorneys and court staff function more efficiently and effectively. By providing a Court Help Center, a court improves its case processing systems and ability to efficiently manage its caseload. Litigant satisfaction and confidence in the courts are also significantly improved by providing Help Center services.

The Access to Justice Program presently oversees 27 New York State Help Centers located in Surrogate's, Supreme, Family and Civil Courts around the state. The Help Centers are encouraged to follow the Access to Justice Program's Best Practice (see http://www.nycourts.gov/ip/nya2j/pdfs/NYSA2J_BestPracticesHelpCenter.pdf). In 2016, nearly 215,000 unrepresented litigants were assisted by the New York State Court Help Centers.

EDUCATION

In 2016, the Access to Justice Program continued its efforts toward increasing communication and sharing ideas between Help Center personnel and providing greater educational programming and training tailored for Help Center needs. The Access to Justice Program conducted quarterly statewide Help Center staff meetings via Skype. These meetings provided Help Center staff with the opportunity to foster their

relationships with one another, collaborate on issues that arise in their Help Centers, determine topics of interest that guide the development of webinars and CLEs offered to the staff throughout the year, and troubleshoot concerns that Help Center staff are faced with on a daily basis. The meetings also provide an opportunity for Help Center staff to further develop the Help Center database which is used by Help Center staff to record data collected from unrepresented litigants for statistical purposes. At the quarterly meetings, Help Center staff also received training on accessing and using the Help Center SharePoint site, an online collaboration site, and the DIY Form Programs.

In 2016, the Access to Justice Program held six one-hour educational webinar trainings for Help Center staff via Skype. Help Center locations were closed during the trainings to ensure that staff could attend. Since Help Center staff are truly at the forefront of an unrepresented litigant's experience in a courthouse, trainings were focused on providing meaningful access to justice when interacting with the public. Webinars highlighted the law and court procedure as well as practical tips on speaking with litigants in plain language. Several of the webinars were presented by Court personnel. The topics included foreclosure, e-filing, service, Surrogate's Court actions, identifying elder abuse and fraud and bankruptcy:

"A thorough and thoughtful presentation of issues involving elder abuse, which highlighted legal and practical ways such abuse may be addressed and prevented, generally and in the role of the Help Center court attorney."

Civil Court Help Center staff, NY Co., Aug. 2016

- A one-hour CLE was held focusing on the commencement of a foreclosure action, answers, common defenses, rights of a tenant in a foreclosure action, and available forms and online resources.
- A training on the newly launched unrepresented litigant portion of the NYSCEF e-filing website was held for the Help Center staff and offered to the public access law librarians.
- A one-hour CLE on civil service served as a refresher course. The training focused on various fact patterns and common scenarios, as well as practical tips for explaining service in procedure or as a defense.
- A training on the types of actions that Surrogate's Court has jurisdiction over focused on the types of cases most often filed by unrepresented litigants. The training reviewed the basics of intestacy, the commencement of an action, where to find resources and problem solving issues.
- Deirdre Lok, Esq. of The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Center for Elder Abuse Prevention at the Hebrew Home at Riverdale presented on the types of abuse that the elderly fall victim to, relevant ethics rules and the available resources in civil and criminal court.
- Jonathan Petts, a bankruptcy lawyer and co-founder of Upsolve, presented a one-hour CLE on the topic of bankruptcy. Although bankruptcy proceedings are not filed in state court, many unrepresented litigants enter Help Centers seeking referrals for bankruptcy matters as well as assistance with issues that are ancillary to bankruptcy

proceedings. The training on bankruptcy was tailored to provide Help Center staff with the information and tools needed to direct unrepresented litigants to the appropriate court when facing bankruptcy. Feedback from Upsolve indicates that after the training, the organization received six Help Center referrals in 2016.

More details about all of the Help Center trainings are set forth in Appendix B.

The Access to Justice Program also extended its education efforts to non-Help Center court employees by holding a webinar entitled, “Help Us Help You: All About Court Help Centers.” This presentation was held for court staff who do not work in the Help Centers to familiarize court personnel with the Help Center as a resource for both staff and litigants. The webinar explained what services are available in the Help Center and who to appropriately refer there (see Appendix B). It was this webinar that sparked the Surrogate’s Courts in Kings and New York County to begin preparations for establishing Help Centers in 2017.

As is more fully detailed in Part VII, the Access to Justice Program received a number of visitors from other jurisdictions who came to observe and learn about the successful New York State Court Help Centers. Teresa Hassler, Esq., Director of Research, Policy & Planning – Office of the Pro Se Clerk from NYC Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH) and Erika Rickard, Esq., Associate Director of Field Research at Harvard Law School’s Access to Justice Lab, visited the Bronx Family Court Help Center, which is a model facility where unrepresented litigants can create and file petitions, meet with volunteer attorneys, receive copies of court orders, utilize one of ten DIY Form terminals, and can even appear before a Court Referee. Romanian lawyers and Nepalese judges and lawyers visited the New York County Civil Court Help Center. In addition, visitors from the Maryland State Court System and a second group from OATH were escorted through the Kings County Civil Court Help Center.

The unified Help Center Database used by Help Center staff across the state to record statistical information about the unrepresented litigants they assist was updated to increase ease of use and decrease the amount of time Help Center staff spend entering information into the database. With the assistance of the Department of Technology, the Access to Justice Program Special Counsel was able to fine tune the new Help Center database and develop a database guide. In 2016, the first phase of the new Help Center database was rolled out, enabling Help Center staff to enter data. The second phase of the roll out will allow staff members to run reports based on the data entered.

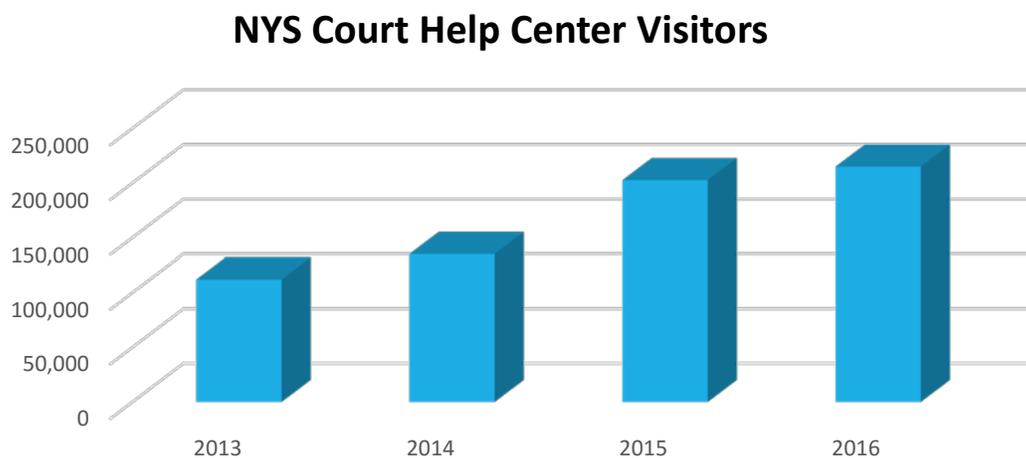
SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC

In honor of National Pro Bono Celebration Week, the Access to Justice Program coordinated a number of free workshops around the state presented by Help Center personnel. The workshops provided free legal information focusing on the issues litigants commonly ask about when visiting Help Centers. The Monroe County Hall of Justice held a workshop focused on the many issues that both landlords and tenants

encounter. Workshops on small claims matters were held in Bronx County Supreme Court and twice in Columbia County Supreme Court. In Queens County Supreme Court, a workshop provided unrepresented litigants with the opportunity to learn how the Court Help Center could assist them with their legal matters. Information was also provided about uncontested divorces and the many services that the court offers to assist unrepresented litigants with the preparation of their papers. A workshop on foreclosure was held at Nassau County Supreme Court. In addition, Help Center staff presented at the Pro Bono Day Open House, hosted by the Nassau County Bar Association where they offered several presentations on the foreclosure process and other issues.

Help Center staff also provided free legal information aboard the Mobile Legal Help Center in Queens County with a focus on the common social and legal issues faced by the elder LGBTQ community. (See Part III, under Mobile Legal Help Center.)

The staff size of each Help Center varies, with some Help Centers staffed by one person and some staffed by five. Irrespective of the number of Help Center staff at any given Help Center, one thing remains the same, they are all high volume, fast paced centers where unrepresented litigants are able to obtain legal information, forms, and referrals. In 2016, the Help Centers across New York State assisted an estimated number of 214,989 unrepresented litigants. These figures do not include the New York City Family Court Help Centers.



In 2016, Help Centers located in New York City Supreme Courts alone, assisted approximately 88,377 unrepresented litigants.

- Bronx County Supreme Court continues to be New York City’s busiest Help Center assisting 30,214 unrepresented litigants.
- Kings County Supreme Court assisted 12,574 unrepresented litigants.
- The New York County Supreme Court Help Center assisted 23,898 unrepresented litigants. This is an increase of over 5,000 unrepresented litigants assisted in 2015.

- Queens County Supreme Court assisted 14,686 unrepresented litigants.
- Richmond County Supreme Court assisted 6,965 unrepresented litigants in 2016, more than doubling their assistance in 2015, with an increase of over 3,000 unrepresented litigants.

In 2016, New York City Civil Court Help Centers assisted approximately 83,695 unrepresented litigants. Civil Court Help Center staff provide unrepresented litigants with legal information, explain court procedures and court orders, review court papers and provide referrals.

- The Bronx County Civil Court Help Center assisted at least 21,328 unrepresented litigants in 2016 which is nearly 5,000 unrepresented litigants more than those assisted in 2015.
- The Harlem Community Justice Center assisted 759 unrepresented litigants even though their *pro se* attorney was on maternity leave for 50% of the year.
- The Kings County Civil Court Help Center assisted 20,317 unrepresented litigants in 2016 which is nearly 4,000 unrepresented litigants more than those assisted in 2015.
- The New York County Civil Court Help Center assisted 12,878 unrepresented litigants.
- The Queens County Civil Court Help Center assisted 19,965 unrepresented litigants.
- The Red Hook Community Justice Center assisted 698 unrepresented litigants in person.
- The Richmond County Civil Court Help Center, staffed by one person assisted approximately 7,750 unrepresented litigants in 2016, an increase of almost 2,000 people assisted in 2015.

Richmond County is presently the only county located within New York City with a Help Center in the Surrogate's Court. In 2016, this Help Center assisted 4,033 unrepresented litigants an increase of over 1,000 unrepresented litigants from 2015.

In 2016, Help Centers outside of New York City assisted an estimated 38,884 unrepresented litigants.

- The 3rd Judicial District Help Center marked its first full year that the Help Center was open. The Help Center is located in the Columbia County Law Library and focuses on Family and City Court issues. Staffed by one person, the Help Center assisted 625 unrepresented litigants. This Help Center earned a DIY Star Award in 2016 (see Part VIII, Recognition).
- The 7th Judicial District Help Center is located in a multi-bench courthouse in Monroe County. The Help Center primarily provides legal information to unrepresented litigants seeking assistance with matrimonial, family and landlord-tenant matters. In 2016, the 7th Judicial District Help Center assisted 2,839 unrepresented litigants.
- The 8th Judicial District Help Center assisted 7,096 unrepresented litigants with the continued assistance of attorneys from Western New York Legal Center and Buffalo Legal Aid. Of the 7,096 unrepresented litigants assisted, 3,346 unrepresented

litigants were assisted in person and 3,750 unrepresented litigants were assisted by phone.

- The 9th Judicial District Supreme Court Help Center is located in Westchester County Supreme Court. In 2016, the Help Center assisted approximately 7,571 unrepresented litigants with 50% less staff members than in 2015.

There are three Help Centers located within the 10th Judicial District, one in Nassau County and two in Suffolk County.

- The Nassau County Help Center assisted 12,504 unrepresented litigants in 2016, 6,575 were assisted in person, 5,248 unrepresented litigants were assisted by phone and 582 unrepresented litigants were assisted by mail/email.
- In the Suffolk County Riverhead Help Center 2,474 unrepresented litigants were assisted.
- In the Suffolk County Central Islip Help Center 5,775 unrepresented litigants were assisted.

A listing of the Court Help Centers and what services are available at each one can be found at <http://nycourts.gov/CourtHelp/GoingToCourt/helpcenters.shtml>. In 2016, the Help Center webpage garnered nearly 60,000 page views.

COURT NAVIGATOR PROGRAM

The Court Navigator Program (CNP), an extension of the former Resolution Assistance Program, was designed by the Chief Judges' Non-Lawyer Committee. It was established in 2014 via Administrative Order of the former Chief Administrative Judge (<http://www.nycourts.gov/COURTS/nyc/SSI/pdfs/AO-42-14.pdf>) to provide pro bono non-legal services to unrepresented litigants in housing and consumer credit cases. In nonpayment proceedings, cases where landlords sue tenants to collect rent, unrepresented tenants and owners or landlords face the possibility of losing their homes through eviction or foreclosure. In consumer debt proceedings, represented credit card companies, hospitals and banks, sue litigants who are often unrepresented and unaware of their rights or the resources available to them. Recruiting and training non-lawyers to help litigants “navigate” the court system provides access to a much greater pool of volunteers to assist litigants at the courthouse where they may need it most.



The Court Navigator Program partners with Housing Court Answers and University Settlement in Kings County, which operate Court Navigator programs according to their own structure and supervising entity. The Access to Justice Program supervises the Court Navigator Program in the Bronx County Civil Court Consumer Debt Part, and the Bronx, Kings, New York and Queens County Housing Courts.

In Kings County Housing Court, a litigant's earliest contact with the CNP is with a Navigator under the supervision of Housing Court Answers (HCA). HCA Navigators meet litigants as they wait on line outside the L&T Clerk's Office. HCA Navigators help litigants file their Answers and screen litigants to see if they would be more

appropriately served by University Settlement Navigators, who are available to provide more comprehensive ongoing services to specific populations. HCA Navigators do not accompany litigants into the courtroom, cannot offer any legal advice, and do not conduct any follow-up with litigants.

Litigants with more complex cases are funneled to the University Settlement (US) Navigator Program. The US Navigator Program is staffed by one Program Coordinator who oversees the program and takes cases, two full-time Navigators and one part-time Navigator. US staff are in court on regular days to complete any intakes referred by HCA. After a case is assessed and accepted, US Navigators stay with litigants through the entire housing court process and thus provide the most comprehensive case assistance of the three Navigator groups. These Navigators accompany litigants to court, speak in the courtroom if asked a factual question by the judge or court attorney, and provide the social services needed throughout the process to ensure that tenants are able to maintain their homes. They cannot offer legal advice.

The third Navigator program is supervised by the Access to Justice Program and is operated in conjunction with LawHelpNY. The CNP recruits and trains non-lawyers, predominantly college students, but also persons deemed appropriate by the CNP to provide general information, written materials, and one-on-one assistance to unrepresented litigants at their court appearances in the Housing Court Resolution Parts and in the Consumer Debt Part of the Bronx Civil Court. Unrepresented litigants connect with Court Navigators in Housing Court or in the Consumer Debt part of Civil Court once an announcement is made by court staff that volunteers are available to assist them. Litigants are helped on a first-come first-serve basis. Court Navigators also take the initiative to approach litigants in the hallways and in the courtroom to offer their assistance and guidance.

Unlike Housing Court Answers and University Settlement Navigators, CNP Navigators can help litigants who need assistance but do not meet other eligibility guidelines. Litigants who come to court are often unfamiliar with the process and uncomfortable speaking up for themselves. Court Navigators can report any inappropriate behavior or communication by an adversary and raise awareness about available resources including places where litigants can seek free legal information and/or advice, and apply for social services. In addition, Court Navigators provide moral support to litigants, help with accessing and completing court forms, accessing interpreters, assisting with keeping paperwork in order, and explaining what to expect and what are the roles of each person in the courtroom. Court Navigators are also permitted to accompany unrepresented litigants into the courtroom, but cannot address the court on their own. They are able to respond to factual questions asked by the Judge. Some Court Navigators are also trained to assist litigants with the DIY Form programs.

The CNP connects New Yorkers who wish to offer their time and skills to members of their community in need of assistance and support as they navigate the court system. In return, volunteers are provided with training, supervision and a unique opportunity to make contacts, and learn about courthouse procedures. College students with an interest and focus on legal, paralegal or social work studies who may want to pursue further studies or a career in that field are particularly attracted to the CNP. Students often volunteer to fulfill their school's community service or pro bono requirement and some serve in exchange for class credit. All

“The best part was helping others. Once the litigants understood the process, they felt more comfortable speaking with the landlord's attorney, asking for a conference, and explaining their case to the judge. They were able to relax and focus on the issue at hand: their rent arrears, and how they are going to pay them to avoid an eviction...The Navigator Program is about helping others by providing them with information they may not be aware of that can help resolve their case.”

CNP – Housing Volunteer, Bronx Co., Dec. 2016

participants are eligible to get a Certificate of Service in recognition and appreciation of their service and participation in the Program upon completing their 30-hour commitment. Through their participation in the Program, all participants become keenly aware of the needs of the vulnerable populations who come to Court without representation, which in turn brings light to the importance of doing pro bono work and sparks a greater commitment towards a deeper and longer involvement in doing volunteer service. The CNP maintains webpages for prospective and participating volunteers at <http://www.nycourts.gov/COURTS/nyc/housing/rap.shtml>.

During 2014-2015, the American Bar Foundation in association with the National Center for State Courts and with the support of a grant from the Public Welfare Foundation carried out a social science evaluation of the three New York City Court Navigator Programs. The findings of the evaluation were published in December 2016, “Roles Beyond Lawyers: Evaluation of the New York City Court Navigator Programs.” According to the Report, “people without formal legal training can provide meaningful assistance and services to litigants who are not represented by a lawyer.” The Report further states that:

“[T]hese services can impact several kinds of outcomes, ranging from litigants’ understanding of court processes and empowerment to present their side of the case, to providing more relevant information to the decision-maker, to formal legal outcomes and the real-life outcomes experienced by assisted litigants and their families.”

The Report is available at <http://www.americanbarfoundation.org/research/summary/29>.

The Access to Justice Program also facilitated another study of the CNP conducted by Pro Bono Net, funded by a Legal Services Corporation Technology Initiative Grant awarded to LAWNY (Legal Assistance of Western New York), to assess and create

technology to assist the Court Navigators. As a result of this study, Pro Bono Net working with Legal Services NYC and Georgetown University Law Center's Technology Innovation and Law Practicum class, created an app for the CNP called the "Navigator's Compass." The Navigator's Compass, using Neota Logic, is designed to help Court Navigators issue spot and connect litigants with appropriate referrals, resources and court services, like interpreters, Help Centers, DIY Forms and other key resources described in the 200+ page Navigator training manual. The Access to Justice Program is in the process of fine tuning and correcting the app.

In 2016, nine prerequisite Housing Court Navigator trainings were held at the New York and Bronx County Civil Courts. A total of 142 Court Navigators were trained. The 114 Housing Court Navigators contributed about 2,260 pro bono hours to the Program. These volunteers were able to help approximately 2,640 unrepresented tenants or landlords. In addition, two Landlord-Tenant DIY Form Program workshops were offered at the New York County Civil Court. Twenty-six Court Navigators who had undergone the prerequisite training attended this supplemental training and volunteered over 300 hours and helped more than 250 unrepresented litigants generate court forms on the Court's public access computer terminals.

Four out of the nine aforementioned prerequisite trainings were held as joint Housing and Consumer Debt sessions in Bronx County. A total of 28 Consumer Debt Navigators were trained and volunteered in the Bronx County Consumer Debt CNP, assisting over 580 consumer litigants in the Consumer Debt Part. Training topics included an overview of the Civil and Housing Court, basics of consumer debt cases and nonpayment proceedings, interviewing and communication skills, and using the DIY computers and LawHelp. (See Appendix A for more information about the CNP trainings.)

In 2016, members of University Settlement and Housing Court Answers and students and graduates from a number of area colleges and programs actively participated and served in the Court Navigator Program, including New York University; Columbia University; Barnard College; Morrisville State College; Stony Brook University; College of Staten Island; Queensborough Community College; Hofstra University; Bronx Community College; Pace University; J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College; The City College of New York; Skadden Arps Honors Program in Legal Studies; the New York City Paralegal Association; Borough of Manhattan Community College; Berkeley College; Medgar Evers College; Boricua College; College of New Rochelle; College of Mount St. Vincent; Hostos Community College; Hunter College; John Jay College of Criminal Justice; Lehman College; Manhattan College; and Mercy College. Court Navigators were also recognized during the National Pro Bono Week Awards Celebration (see Part VIII: Recognition).

GUARDIAN AD LITEM PROGRAM

The Access to Justice Program oversees the New York City Housing Court Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) Program. The GAL Program recruits, trains, supervises and maintains a pool of GALs for Housing Court Judges to appoint on behalf of people facing a Housing Court proceeding who are disadvantaged due to age or disability. Such impairments place litigants at a disadvantage when they are not able to fully participate in resolving their New York City Housing Court cases. Instead, they might be more likely to enter into unrealistic agreements, forego viable defenses, agree to unfavorable terms, fail to explore all options, or may not follow through with the terms of the agreement entered into, thus heightening their risk for eviction.

“Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to serve as a [GAL]. It has been such a gratifying and humbling experience for me. I have met so many great people during my service...”

*GAL, NY and Kings counties,
April 2016*

Litigants who are unable to advocate for themselves due to a physical or mental impairment greatly benefit from the appointment of a GAL who can intercede and successfully resolve their case on their behalf. Once appointed, GALs attend every court appearance, work to secure One-Shot-Deals to pay for arrears owed, set-up heavy duty cleanings to render an apartment safe, reinstate lost entitlements or secure new ones, or connect the litigant to services to prevent court recidivism. Litigants who are appointed a GAL do not have to pay for these services.

Guardians Ad Litem are trained by a panel of experts in the fields of legal and social work advocacy and landlord-tenant law. Both attorneys and non-attorneys can participate in the Program. In fact, approximately 48% of the Program's current GALs are non-attorneys, yet have a wealth of social work advocacy experience. To safeguard the interests of the population served, GALs undergo a background check and complete an interview and reference check before being invited to participate in the Program. This results in a highly qualified select group of people being added to the list. Guardians Ad Litem are compensated by the New York City Human Resources Administration, but also agree to accept at least three pro bono appointments per year in cases that do not qualify for payment because the ward is not a client of HRA's Adult Protective Services.

The GAL Program's Special Counsel, who also holds a master's degree in social work, plays an active role in advocating for GALs facing unique challenges in resolving their wards' court cases. At times, the Special Counsel acts as an intermediary in securing information for GALs and facilitating communication between GALs and outside organizations that play an instrumental role in the resolution of a ward's Housing Court case. This advocacy results in the successful resolution of countless cases. Without this support, GALs would encounter a multitude of bureaucratic obstacles.

Information on the GAL program for prospective and participating GALs, landlords, and tenants is available at <http://nycourts.gov/courts/nyc/housing/GAL.shtml>.

In 2016, as is more fully detailed in Appendix A, the GAL Program conducted numerous trainings. Three free CLE general trainings to become a GAL were held and a total of 29 new GALs were trained. In addition, GALs were invited to participate in four supplemental CLE workshops. These workshops are provided to enhance the GALs' ability to render quality services to their wards. Supplemental trainings included: "Avoiding Advocate Burnout: Working with Clients in Crisis," "Identifying and Responding to Concerns Regarding Possible Elder Abuse and Financial Exploitation," "Enhancing Housing Court/GAL Collaboration," and "Basic Trial Preparation." The GAL Program also collaborated with the Harry and Jeannette Weinberg Center for Elder Abuse Prevention at the Hebrew Home at Riverdale to provide specialized training for ten GALs on how to identify and address elder abuse in the context of their GAL work. The trained GALs now serve as a resource to the court and other GALs in need of guidance when elder abuse is a concern.

To alleviate the pressure experienced by the court and GALs in trying to keep up with the demand for pro bono appointments, the GAL Program provided lay GAL training to 24 family members seeking to become a GAL for their impaired loved one (see Appendix A). The GAL Program also partnered with White & Case LLP and trained two of the law firm's associates. They are now available to accept GAL pro bono appointments in the Bronx. Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler LLP continues to allow associates to accept pro bono appointments in New York County.

"[MH] appeared in court after your GAL training and was appointed GAL for his father...He told me how helpful the training was and how grateful he was that it was available... There has been an overwhelmingly positive response. In my years as a court attorney and now my time as a judge, the positive comments have been from every single person...Thank you for all that you do."

Housing Court Judge, Queens Co., April 2016

In 2016, the GAL Program actively participated in efforts to promote awareness about the importance of safeguarding the rights of impaired Housing Court litigants and cultivate a better understanding of how GALs serve as a valuable resource to an impaired litigant, the court, legal service providers, and community advocates. The GAL Program's Special Counsel participated in a panel discussion hosted by the NYC Bar Association's Disability Law Committee entitled "Representing Individuals with Disabilities and the Improving Litigation Experience for Lawyers and Litigants with Disabilities." The Special Counsel co-presented a workshop entitled "Guardians Ad Litem: Safeguarding Rights of Impaired Seniors Facing Eviction" at the American Bar Association's 2016 National Aging and Law Conference. The Special Counsel also provided an overview of the Program to a group of NYC housing providers and nonprofit organizations funded by the New York City Department of Youth and Community

Development to help low-income individuals maintain safe and affordable housing.

Additionally, throughout 2016, the Special Counsel presented to visitors from Nepal, Chile, the Maryland State Court, and Indiana seeking to learn more about how the GAL Program protects the rights of impaired litigants facing eviction. Of note, all visitors stated that no similar dedicated program exists for the appointment of GALs in landlord-tenant matters in their jurisdictions. (Additional information about these presentations can be found in Appendix A.) Most significantly, the GAL Program's Special Counsel published a White Paper entitled, "Creating a Successful Court-Based Program to Safeguard Access to Justice for Elderly, Mentally, and Physically Impaired Litigants at Risk for Eviction" to highlight the need for court systems nation-wide to take the lead in creating a GAL program as a matter of judicial fairness. A roadmap for replication is also detailed in the paper. (See Part VII, under Publications.)

"Since my return to Indiana, everyone I have talked to about New York's GAL Program found it quite inspiring. I will be looking for ways to adopt and incorporate various aspects of your Program so we can reduce the long-lasting negative effects that evictions have on our most vulnerable residents and their families."

Heartland Pro Bono Council Plan Administrator, Oct., 2016

In an effort to acknowledge the valuable service GALs perform, the GAL Program successfully advocated for an increase in GAL compensation. The NYC Human Resources Administration increased GAL compensation from \$600 to \$750 per case starting in January 2017, provided GALs meet certain minimum requirements. This fee increase may not totally compensate GALs for every hour they serve, but it does communicate that GALs are valued for their service. To this end, the Access to Justice Program recognized 13 GALs at its annual pro bono recognition event for their steadfast commitment to pro bono work and service to impaired litigants and the court (see Part VIII: Recognition, as well as the Partners, Friends and Volunteers section in the back pages of this Report.) This honor is particularly special because the GALs receiving awards are nominated by Housing Court judges and court attorneys.

Lastly, the Order Appointing a Guardian Ad Litem was rewritten in plain language to make it clearer to the ward what the appointment means. This is extremely important given the population served by the program and the work that GALs perform on their behalf. (See Part V: Simplification of Forms for more details.)

In 2016, approximately 59% of the number of litigants appointed a GAL were facing a nonpayment proceeding and 41% a holdover proceeding. It is estimated that more than 32% of the judicial requests for GALs were made due to concerns that the litigant was mentally impaired, 18% were due to physical impairment concerns, while 50% were due to both. In addition, over 55% of the people appointed a GAL were age 60 and above. In 2016 the New York City Housing Part GAL Program was able to serve over 1,580 physically and mentally impaired litigants.

ASSIGNED COUNSEL PROJECT

The Access to Justice Program continues its partnership with the Department for the Aging (DFTA) to provide free legal and social work services to seniors facing eviction. Seniors facing New York City Housing Court proceedings often live in apartments that are rent controlled or rent stabilized, have Section 8 subsidies, or are the recipients of entitlements such as SCRIE. Under these protective laws and subsidies, seniors are able to afford rent payments notwithstanding limited income. Yet, with increased age, many seniors find themselves in a position where, due to their deteriorating health, they are no longer able to manage their responsibilities in the same way, resulting in a Housing Court proceeding being brought against them.

Established in 2005, the Assigned Counsel Project (ACP) provides eligible seniors with an attorney and social worker, or social work intern, who work as a team to help seniors resolve their Housing Court cases when they are facing an eviction. Seniors must be sixty years of age or older, have an identifiable social service need, and a pending Housing Court case in order to be assisted by the Project. Legal representation is provided at no cost to the litigant by the following sub-contracted legal service providers: Brooklyn Legal Services, Inc.; JASA Queens Legal Services for the Elderly; Legal Aid Society, Brooklyn; Legal Aid Society, the Bronx; and MFY Legal Services, Inc. More information on the Project can be found at <http://www.nycourts.gov/courts/nyc/housing/services.shtml#acp>.

The Access to Justice Program conducts overall program coordination and advocacy. This includes facilitating communication between the partners; ensuring that Judges refer seniors to the ACP, that seniors are aware of the existence of the ACP, and that the partners remain responsive to the challenges serving a growing number of seniors with existing limited staff. The Civil Court Housing Court Attorneys conduct initial screening to determine if a senior's case is appropriate for services and to coordinate with DFTA and the legal service providers so that seniors are successfully linked to an attorney and social worker once their referral is accepted. The partners also continue to work diligently to connect those who are not accepted by ACP to other available resources for help. Seniors who may otherwise find it challenging to obtain help in the processing of renewal applications or delivery of information necessary to remain in their apartment are assisted by the Access to Justice Program Special Counsel and the DFTA ACP Director through informal but effective advocacy efforts. In 2015, the ACP Director was present in the New York County Help Center once a week to assist seniors. In 2016, this assistance was expanded to include one day a week in the Kings County Help Center. The ACP served approximately 511 seniors facing Housing Court proceedings in Bronx, Kings, New York and Queens Counties in 2016.

ASSIGNED COUNSEL PROJECT INTERNSHIP

In 2016, the Assigned Counsel Project Internship Program operated in the Kings and Queens Housing Courts. The Internship Program, which was created in 2014, recruits, trains, and supervises law students, recent law graduates and attorneys to assist the court in conducting intake and assessing the legal and social services needs of vulnerable seniors at risk of eviction. Interested volunteers must successfully interview, participate in a comprehensive training, and complete a 50-hour service commitment alongside experienced Help Center Court Attorneys in Kings County or Court Attorneys in a Housing Court Part in Queens County.

“When elderly litigants come to ACP interns for an interview it is often their first chance to speak with someone who has time to listen to their story. I learned interview skills to make sure someone has a chance to have their story heard, while still obtaining answers to questions that could provide them with a defense.”

ACP Internship Program Law Student Volunteer, Kings and Queens Cos., Nov. 2016

The internship training consists of an 8.5 hour video replay of the VLFD Housing and VLP Housing training, a two hour video replay of “Basics of the Family Eviction Prevention Supplement (FEPS)” and “The One Shot Deal,” and two live trainings. The live trainings instruct the interns on how to identify social service needs when conducting an intake with a senior seeking to be accepted into the program. The training teaches the use of open ended questions, how to pay close attention to body language when gathering information and how to address sensitive areas that may present a concern. An overview of the ACP program and a brief introduction to the Court Help Centers and Housing Court are provided. The interns are trained to conduct intake and practice issue spotting to increase intake efficiency. The internship and training is conducted through collaboration between the Access to Justice Program’s Housing Court Initiatives, Help Centers, and Court-Based Interdisciplinary Programs. Visit <http://www.nycourts.gov/COURTS/nyc/housing/intern.shtml> to learn more.

In 2016, two classes of volunteers participated in this internship program. (See Appendix A.) Four interns completed well beyond their 50-hour commitment serving their community’s most vulnerable members. The volunteers served 95 litigants in Kings County and 31 litigants in Queens County.

HOUSING HELP PROGRAM

In 2004, the New York City Housing Court partnered with the United Way of New York City, the New York City Department of Homeless Services (DHS) and Legal Service NYC to establish the Housing Help Program (HHP), the nation’s first court-based homelessness prevention program. Since 2009, the Access to Justice Program has partnered with DHS, Robin Hood, The Legal Aid Society and various community based organizations, continuing the HHP’s provision of integrated legal and social services to

threatened families at the greatest risk of homelessness in the Bronx, Kings and Queens Counties.

Upon entering the Housing Court, litigants from designated zip codes are referred to a Court Clerk who confirms eligibility. Attorneys, paralegals and social workers from the Legal Aid Society then interview the family, exploring all of the issues that have led to their housing crisis. The HHP then helps the family answer the landlord's petition and develops a comprehensive legal and social service plan to prevent the family from becoming homeless. Services range from full representation by an attorney throughout the Housing Court case to brief assistance from a paralegal with obtaining rental arrears to obtaining long-term supportive services through a social worker. On the return date of the petition, a single judge hears all HHP cases in a designated Part where HHP staff is available to all families. This unique approach allows for greater judicial oversight, meaningful negotiations between the parties and far more equitable settlements. With the population in New York City homeless shelters rising, the HHP promotes housing stability. In 2013, the John F. Kennedy's School of Government at Harvard University recognized the HHP as one of the top 25 programs in that year's "Innovations in American Government Award" competition.

In 2016, the HHP's innovative approach to homelessness prevention continued to be an overwhelming success. HHP handled 2,772 cases with 9,416 people benefitting from the services.

COURTHOUSE SLIDESHOWS

Litigants often have downtime while they are in the courthouse, whether they are waiting for their case to be called, to speak to Help Center staff, or on line in the Court Clerk's office. To maximize their experience in the courthouse, the Access to Justice Program creates informative slideshows to educate court visitors about court resources and procedures. This display of information in the courthouse is an excellent low cost method to deliver information in an eye catching manner. This delivery method can reach people who may be in need of information but too intimidated to ask.

In 2016, the Access to Justice Program continued to expand the New York City Housing Court slideshow. Playing silently on large flat screens in the background of the Resolution Part courtrooms and Clerk's Offices, each slide provides a plain language snapshot of information in English and Spanish. Slides explain different legal terms along with the availability of various services such as GALs and interpreters. The slideshows are made in PowerPoint and play on a continuous loop over the court's intranet. Changes can be made from one central location to any of the court's personalized slideshows. Twelve new slides explaining the availability of interpreters were translated into Chinese, Russian and Haitian Creole. These new slides inform native speakers of their right to a free court interpreter and how to ask for one. A sampling of the new slides is annexed as Appendix C.

The Access to Justice Program partnered with Design for America, New York University's Campus Studio, on a courthouse signage project. Design for America (DFA) takes on design innovation projects for social good. Over the 2016-17 school year, an interdisciplinary team of students is working on ways to improve access to justice by defining signage best practices to help unrepresented litigants navigate courthouses and learn about available resources, such as interpreters and Help Centers. As part of their research, DFA students visited several courthouses, including New York and Queens County Civil Courts and Bronx Family Court. The students wanted to see the facilities through the eyes of a first-time visitor. They started each visit by going through the magnetometers and looking around the court on their own before taking a more formal tour. A visit to the Red Hook Community Court is planned for early 2017. The Red Hook court recently completed a project to improve procedural justice and perceptions of fairness through graphic design strategies and new navigational signs. DFA is expected to complete this problem solving through design, "Wayfinding" project in the Spring of 2017.

PART II: MEANINGFUL ACCESS THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

In 2016, the Access to Justice Program continued to focus its energies on technology-based resources and services as a cost-effective means of disseminating information and assistance to the public. Statistics and feedback indicate that technology is a key element in the struggle to provide 100% meaningful access to justice. The internet is the first place many litigants go to find answers. The internet is also ideal for litigants who cannot easily visit a courthouse.

Accordingly, the Access to Justice Program uses technology solutions to minimize barriers that many unrepresented litigants face. All projects consider user experience and simplification, as well as legal needs. In 2016, the statewide CourtHelp website was expanded, the document assembly programs were modified, improved and promoted and greater advantage was taken of social media outlets to disseminate information, especially Twitter and Facebook. The internet was utilized to guide both litigants and attorneys to online resources and technology was employed at the courthouse to disseminate information. An overview of the Access to Justice Program's accomplishments is discussed below.

COURTHELP WEBSITE

The Access to Justice Program writes and manages the content for CourtHelp (www.nycourthelp.gov), the New York State court system's website for unrepresented litigants. The website is intended to assist court users who do not have an attorney and are looking for information over the internet. The site is designed with an emphasis on providing easy to understand legal and procedural information and instructions. In addition to various topical sections, CourtHelp is the main portal for the court system's DIY Form programs, as well as a place to find court forms, general court system information, and helpful links to resources.



In 2016, the Access to Justice Program continued to add new information to CourtHelp. The most significant and extensive improvement was the addition of nearly 60 new pages of criminal-related content to the website. The criminal subject areas added include: Case Basics, Criminal Records, Crime Victims, Sentencing, Collateral Consequences and Getting Rights Back. In addition, over 150 new criminal-related links were added to the A-Z topics. The criminal pages produced over 76,000 visits and over 142,000 page views in the two and a half months they were published in 2016.

In conjunction with the criminal launch, the CourtHelp postcard was updated (see Appendix D) and a new flyer was posted online for staff to download and post: http://www.nycourts.gov/ip/nya2j/pdfs/flyers/CourtHelp_Poster_2016.pdf. Over 250,000 CourtHelp postcards were mailed to Criminal, Supreme, City, County, District, Town and Village Courts around the state to disseminate to the public. In addition, webinars were held for court staff to learn about the new resource (see Appendix B) and a

recording of the webinar was posted on the Access to Justice Program's intranet training page. Feedback indicates that this new content will greatly benefit court visitors. For example, the Chief Clerk of Cortland County Supreme and County Court was able to utilize the information presented at the webinar to identify for the court and attorneys the collateral consequences of a considered plea on a defendant's immigration status.

Furthermore, of the 76 court employees responding to the post-webinar surveys, 97% stated that they thought the new criminal-related content on the CourtHelp website would help them or their colleagues assist the public; the remaining 3% stated they were not sure. Below is a small sampling of the many enthusiastic comments from court staff about the criminal content:

"I'm not sure what I expected from this presentation – but I must tell you, I was so impressed. The site is user-friendly and chock full of great information. I will be sharing this with co-workers and I will be studying from it for promotional exams. For those instrumental in its development – job well done."

Syracuse City Court employee, Oct. 2016

- "The criminal content is excellent!! It will be helpful for both Court employees and the general public. I'm excited that we have this at our fingertips - such a wealth of information. Thank you for all that put this together."
- "I like that everything is in simple language so it is easy to understand for non-court personnel."
- "The website is a great asset to the Clerk's Office and the public. I already refer the public to the website but the presentation was very helpful in that it allowed me to take the time to expand on my own knowledge of what is available on the site."
- "The new criminal content is comprehensive and user friendly! Excellent!"
- "There are questions that have definitive answers in black and white."
- "Very easy to access and excellent content."
- "I like all of the information the [sic] is readily available to court users that is often asked of clerks at the window."
- "I feel like it really covers just about everything a person would want to know."
- "It gives a great framework for staff to respond to public inquiries."
- "I like the legal glossary and the look up bar. I also like all the cross reference links available. I also think it was a great idea to include a section on victims' rights."
- "The presentation was excellent, easy to follow and will be useful on a daily basis."
- "Amazed at the amount of information that is now available on this site. In the past I have referred the public to the site for civil; land-lord tenant; small claims assistance. Now the site is widely expanded. This is a VERY useful tool. Thank you very much."
- "EASY TO READ, EASY TO SEARCH."

Overall, the new content was extremely well-received with no neutral or negative feedback. One hundred percent of the court employees surveyed stated that they would publicize the information presented at the webinar to the public.

Another significant addition to CourtHelp was a new Spanish DIY Form menu page, *Hágalo Usted Mismo*, launched in October to coincide with Hispanic Heritage Month. The new Spanish page contains a list of the Spanish resources available in the programs: http://nycourts.gov/CourtHelp/DIY/index_spanish.shtml. Seventeen DIY Form programs with Spanish resources were listed (see *infra* DIY Form Program Maintenance Updates) and the page generated nearly 11,000 visits in the two and a half months it was live in 2016. The DIY Form program landing pages were also updated to note the available Spanish resources.

In addition, all DIY Form landing pages were updated to clarify when and how an attorney may utilize the programs and links to pro bono and low-bono affirmations were added. The outdated version of the NYC Tenant's Guide was replaced with the new edition. New fillable motion forms were added to the site, including: Notice of Motion, Affidavit in Support, Affidavit in Opposition, Affidavit in Reply, Notice of Cross-Motion and Affidavit in Support of the Cross-Motion and in Opposition to the Motion. These forms were downloaded 20,267 times in 2016. All are linked from the "How to Ask the Court for Something" webpage at <http://nycourts.gov/courthelp//GoingToCourt/motionsOSC.shtml>. This page was the fourth most visited page on CourtHelp.

Foreclosure legislation changes to the CPLR required updating the foreclosure pages on CourtHelp to explain the extension of time to file an Answer available to homeowners appearing at the mandatory foreclosure settlement conferences (see <http://nycourts.gov/CourtHelp/Homes/foreclosures.shtml>). In connection with the foreclosure changes, several definitions were added to the legal glossary and a consumer bill of rights and a plain language information sheet were added to CourtHelp. (See Part V: Simplification.)

In late 2015, the Access to Justice Program partnered with Pro Bono Net's LawHelpNY to provide live chat assistance on the foreclosure pages of the CourtHelp website. At the time, the Access to Justice Program conducted live webinar trainings for 19 LawHelpNY operators to acquaint them with the mechanics and features of the CourtHelp website as well as to learn the basics of foreclosure actions and the available resources. The webinar was recorded and is now incorporated into the training requirements for all new LiveHelp operators. In 2016, an additional 52 operators viewed the recorded webinar. Operators are primarily law students and law graduates working towards their 50-hour pro bono requirement. The operators assisted approximately 100 foreclosure CourtHelp visitors via LiveHelp.



The CourtHelp website attracted 1.45 million unique visitors in 2016, a 53.87% increase over 2015. There were approximately 3.8 million visits and nearly 38 million page views of the CourtHelp pages. As usual, the DIY Form menu and landing pages attracted the most visits. The pages in the DIY folder generated 1,011,437 visits. This is nearly 27% of the total visits to CourtHelp. The name change menu page generated 83,527 visits,

making it the fifth most visited page on CourtHelp. This is the first year that CourtHelp had over one million unique visitors.

DIY FORM DOCUMENT ASSEMBLY PROGRAMS

Access to the justice system requires a litigant to prepare and file court forms. This requirement creates a myriad of difficulties for unrepresented litigants who have no familiarity with law and procedure. Litigants who use the wrong form or cannot find the form they need will not obtain the relief they seek; litigants who leave out necessary information will not prevail; and litigants who do not know what to do after completing the form or are overwhelmed by the paperwork may just give up and never access the justice they seek. Litigants need information provided in a non-intimidating format to assist with language difficulties and comprehension, to know if they are using the correct form, to help properly complete the form, to locate missing information, and to understand next steps. The Access to Justice Program produces attractive, user-friendly document assembly programs, known as DIY (Do-It-Yourself) Forms that address *pro se* needs and alleviate many of these challenges unrepresented litigants face when creating their court papers.

NYS DIY Forms
DO-IT-YOURSELF

DIY Forms are designed as a free and easy method for unrepresented litigants to prepare the court forms and the instructions they need to proceed in court. The programs ask the litigant questions then use the answers to generate a completed personalized court form, which is ready to print, serve and file. The DIY Form programs are available to unrepresented litigants over the internet and in many courthouse Clerks' Offices and Help Centers throughout the state. DIY Form programs are available for litigants in Family, Supreme, County, Surrogate's, District, City, Town, Village, New York City Civil and New York City Housing Courts. A list of the 26 available DIY Form programs can be found on the CourtHelp website:
<http://nycourts.gov/courthelp/DIY/index.shtml>.

The Access to Justice Program develops document assembly programs for unrepresented litigants by using a combination of A2J Author (free download) and HotDocs software. The Access to Justice Program contracts with Pro Bono Net to host completed programs on the LawHelp Interactive (LHI) website. The overall design of the DIY Form program makes the litigant's experience far less intimidating. Every program has the same attractive graphic appearance of a guide walking a litigant step by step along a path that leads to the courthouse. Keeping low literacy users in mind, a limited amount of information is presented on each screen. The experience is personalized by having the litigant choose a gender and then placing him or her on the path with the guide. The programs also address the litigant by his or her first name once this information has been collected.

DIY Form programs maximize an unrepresented litigant's chances of succeeding at the courthouse in a variety of ways. "Pop-ups" explain terms and "Learn More" buttons

provide additional information to help the litigant understand the question. To ensure that the litigant does not omit a necessary element of the application, programs prompt the litigant to enter information if the litigant attempts to continue without completing a mandatory screen. DIY Form programs screen litigants for eligibility and exit them out of the programs if they do not qualify. Litigants do not see questions unless they apply to their situation and do not need to repeatedly input information as is required when completing paper forms. The programs generate as many court forms as the program determines are needed based upon the litigant's responses to the questions in the guided interview. This includes any proposed orders, supplemental pleadings and affidavits of service. Thus, the litigant does not need to worry about choosing the correct court form to complete. Personalized instructions and information are generated which can include filing and service instructions, courthouse locations and hours, court costs and fee waiver information, courtroom procedures, what the adversary may do next, what to do if there is a default, and where to find additional required documents, information or low-cost legal assistance.

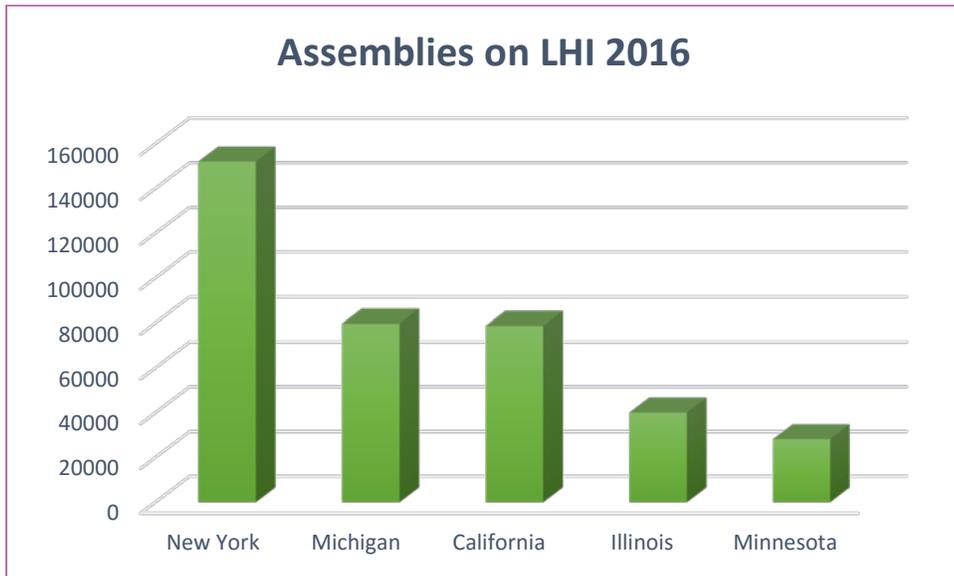
DIY Form programs also assist users with language and comprehension difficulties. Some programs provide pop-up text in other languages or audio to make it easier for users who do not read well or who understand better through listening. Some programs offer graphics or hyperlinks for additional assistance. All programs are sent to a plain language specialist to simplify the text for readers with poor reading ability.

Court forms prepared using this type of document assembly program offer an unrepresented litigant far better assistance than a paper form or a fillable court form. The Access to Justice Program has found that DIY Form programs are an immensely helpful tool for increasing access to justice. At the same time, the DIY Form programs have benefitted the court system by increasing court efficiency. The impact of the DIY Form programs on the NYS court system is delineated in a 2014 article entitled "The Case for Court-Based Document Assembly Programs: A review of the New York State Court System's DIY" Forms," published in the Fordham Urban Law Journal, available at http://www.nycourts.gov/ip/nya2j/pdfs/RochelleKlempner_Court-BasedDIYForms.pdf.

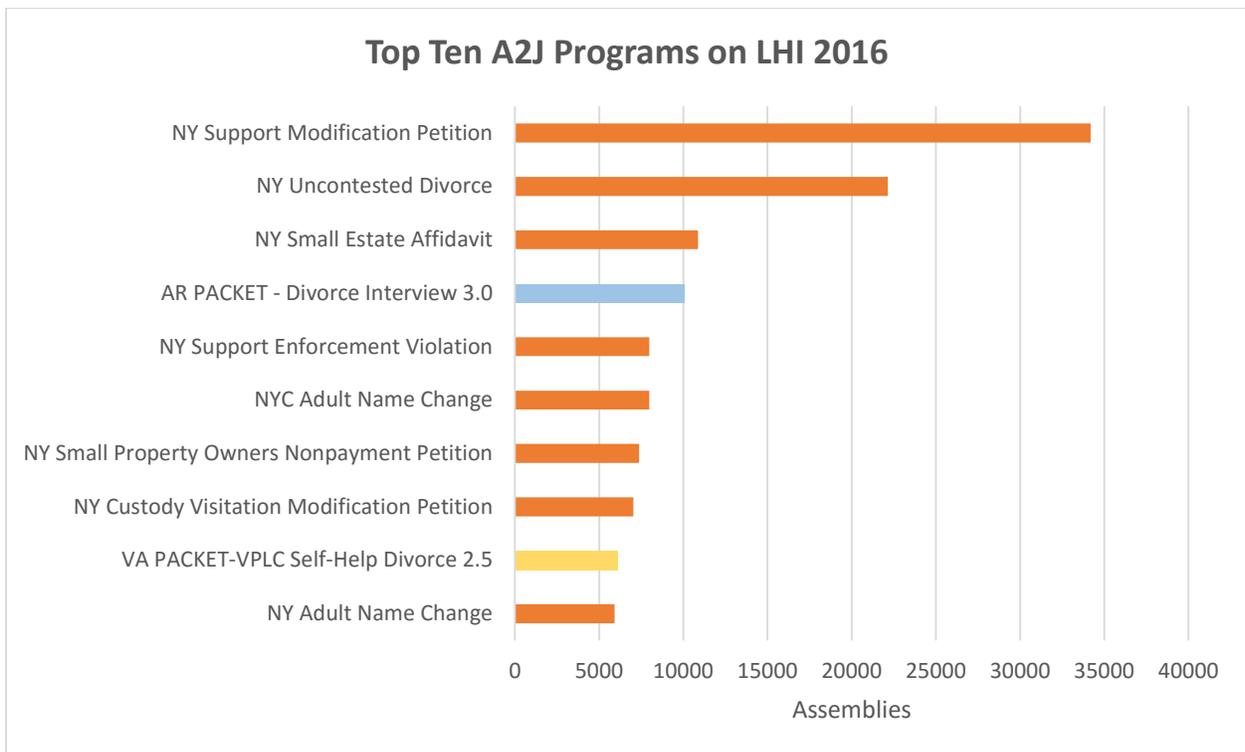
DIY FORM PROGRAM USAGE

The Access to Justice Program tracks DIY Forms program usage and reviews the data to determine where and how to follow-up with program changes and personnel training and outreach. The data is primarily collected from three sources: Law Help Interactive (LHI), DIY User Surveys, and UCMS (the court's case management system when available.)

According to the LHI statistics, for the seventh consecutive year, the New York State courts lead LHI in the number of assemblies. The DIY Form programs account for nearly 28% of the total assemblies generated on the LHI server. There were 138,730 assemblies from DIY Form programs.



Overall, there was a 22% increase in the Access to Justice Program LHI assemblies from 2015. The three most used DIY programs were the Support Modification Petition Program, the Uncontested Divorce Program, and the Small Estate Affidavit Program. They comprised almost 49% of all Access to Justice Program DIY assemblies. These three programs were also the three most used A2J template programs on LHI, comprising over 13.4% of the total assemblies in 2016.



There was a 32.15% increase in assemblies from statewide DIY programs from 2015. Much of the increase in statewide DIY program usage is attributed to the Support Modification Petition Program and the Uncontested Divorce Program. The Support Modification Petition Program continues to be the best performing program with 34,186 assemblies, an increase of 48.76% in usage from 2015. Similarly, the Uncontested Divorce Program had an increase in usage of 22.22% from 2015.

The Access to Justice Program reviews the anonymous DIY User Survey data and uses the feedback to improve usage of the programs. A User Survey is generated every time a document is assembled from a DIY Form program and it is optional for the litigant to complete. Over 20,000 surveys were returned in 2016. This is an increase of 52% from 2015.

The anonymous User Survey consists of nine questions, plus two optional questions about age and income. The User Surveys are programmed to provide the name of the DIY Form program used, the county and the court. The questions solicit information about the litigant's computer background, experience with the DIY Form program, how and where the litigant used the program and if the litigant has any suggestions or comments. The comments are overwhelmingly positive. Comments are used to identify problems that need to be fixed in the programs or issues that need to be addressed in court facilities. Comments are also used to identify exemplary service by a court or individual and used to determine whether recognition with a DIY Star award is warranted (see Part VIII: Recognition). A sampling of comments is posted on the Access to Justice Program's website at <http://www.nycourts.gov/ip/ny2j/diytestimonials.shtml>.

"This was extremely helpful. Legal forms -- even the reasonably straightforward ones -- can be daunting. I was relieved that I didn't even have to look at a form before it was completed. Your instructions are extraordinarily user-friendly. This took about 5 minutes. I'm very grateful."

NYC Civil Court Adult Name Change Program user feedback, Dec. 2016

In 2016, DIY User Surveys provided the following findings:

- 95% of litigants found that the DIY Form program saved them time. This percentage has stayed steady from year to year.
- 77% of litigants were referred to the DIY Form program by a court employee, an increase of 12% from 2015.
- 80% of litigants use the DIY Form program in a court facility such as a Clerk's Office or Help Center. This is a significant increase of 19% from 2015.
- 36% of litigants had an income of less than \$19,999.
- 75% of litigants are between the ages of 25 and 44.
- 85% of litigants have internet in their home.
- 18% of DIY users have used a DIY Form program before. In 2015, this was 16%.

UCMS statistics were used to choose one of the DIY Star award winning courts. Between 2015 and 2016 usage of the DIY Form programs to prepare name change

petitions filed in Queens County Civil Court jumped from 40% to nearly 90% of all filings. Queens County Civil Court Assistant Deputy Chief Clerk Monica Dingle and the Special Term Name Change Staff were awarded DIY Star Awards for their outstanding promotion of the Adult and Child Name Change DIY Form programs. (See Part VIII: Recognition.)

From time to time an attorney or a litigant may submit a DIY Form with an attorney's "blueback" on the papers. The DIY Form programs are free for unrepresented litigants, legal services providers or pro bono attorneys. Commercial use is not permitted. Additionally, select low-bono (reduced fee) programs, who have been authorized by the Access to Justice Program, may use the DIY Form programs. When an attorney submits a DIY Form he or she must file a pro bono or low-bono affirmation. To clarify this procedure, Justice Fisher issued an Advisory Notice on Attorneys' Use of DIY Forms, updated the NYC Civil Court Chief Clerk's Memorandum 185-A on DIY Forms (<http://nycourts.gov/COURTS/nyc/SSI/directives/CCM/CCM185A.pdf>), posted the information on the Access to Justice Program's intranet site and clarified the CourtHelp DIY Form landing pages. Trainings were conducted for the District Executives and the 4th Judicial District Surrogate's Court Chief Clerks (see Appendix B).

DIY FORM PROGRAM MAINTENANCE AND UPDATES

Once a DIY Form program is released, it is continuously maintained and updated based upon user feedback, changes in the law, and technological advances. Additional language options and features are often added where feasible and practical. In 2016, the Access to Justice Program made numerous modifications and language additions to the existing program.

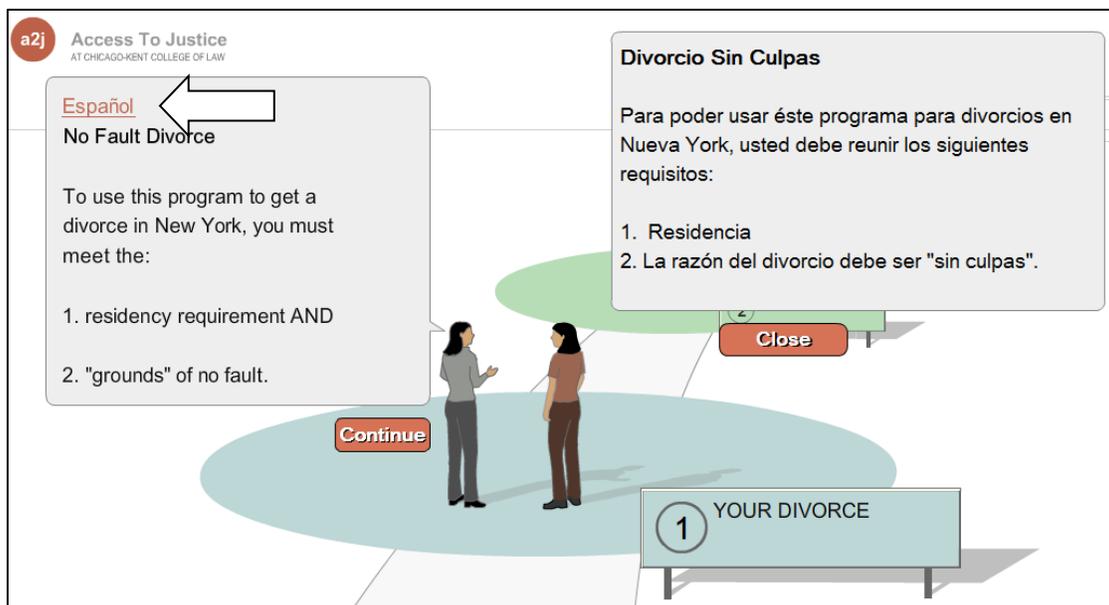
2016 Program Modifications:

- Developed a shortened two-page Financial Disclosure Affidavit. Added the shortened FDA for the 38 counties who opted for it to print with the Family Court support programs.
- Updated the Uncontested Divorce to incorporate the Maintenance Guidelines Law.
- Updated Guardianship Article 17A to conform to statutory change in the language used for "intellectually disabled" wards.
- Updated the physician/psychologist certification form from the Guardianship Article 17A papers to reference the definition of "life-sustaining treatment" in Sec 1750-b(1) instead of the definition in MHL Section 81.29(e).
- Updated the RJI in the Consumer Debt program for Supreme and County Courts to make it clearer that it was a no fee application. Added the defendant's address to the generated RJI.
- Fixed the asset calculator in the Small Estate Affidavit program.
- Updated both the English and Spanish Paternity Petition program to conform to the official Family Court form.
- Deleted addressing the litigant-user by name in the Adult Name Change and NYC Civil Adult Name Change programs.

In 2016, the Access to Justice Program, with the help of Court Interpreters, added many new resources for non-English speaking program users. A number of Spanish resources were launched in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, September 15 – October 15, including the addition of a new DIY Spanish Programs webpage on the CourtHelp website: http://nycourts.gov/CourtHelp/DIY/index_spanish.shtml. (See *supra* CourtHelp section.)

2016 Language Features Added:

- **Spanish “Pop-Ups” Added:** “Pop-ups” are highlighted words in the text that can be clicked on by the user to obtain additional information, often a definition. Pop-ups were incorporated into programs to provide Spanish language translations of the English text. This feature is aimed at LEP users and is helpful when court staff and advocates assist litigants. Users see the text in English and Spanish. “Español” pop-ups were incorporated into every screen’s text and Learn More text in the following programs:
 - Uncontested Divorce DIY Form program, added September 2016. <http://www.nycourts.gov/CourtHelp/DIY/divorce.shtml>. The screen shot below shows how the screens look to DIY users when they click on the Spanish language pop-up.



Sample Spanish Pop-Up Screen

- Child Name Change DIY Form program, added September 2016. <http://www.nycourts.gov/CourtHelp/DIY/childnamechange.shtml>.
- Vacate Default Judgment Consumer Debt DIY Form program, instructions added for Supreme, County and City Courts. Spanish instructions were previously added for the NYC Civil Court. Added September 2016. <http://www.nycourts.gov/CourtHelp/DIY/consumerdebt.shtml>.
- **Spanish Instructions Added:** Spanish instructions were added to a number of DIY Form programs. During the program, the litigant is given the option of choosing

Spanish instructions. If the user chooses the Spanish option, the generated instructions are printed in Spanish in addition to English. This is very helpful to LEP litigants and also helpful for persons who may be assisting the litigant.

- Child Name Change DIY Form program, added June 2016.
<http://www.nycourts.gov/CourtHelp/DIY/childnamechange.shtml>.
 - Uncontested Divorce DIY Form program, added September 2016.
<http://www.nycourts.gov/CourtHelp/DIY/divorce.shtml>.
 - Guardianship Article 17A DIY Form program, added September 2016.
<http://www.nycourts.gov/CourtHelp/DIY/guardianship17A.shtml>.
- Vacate Default Judgment Consumer Debt DIY Form program, instructions added for Supreme, County and City Courts. Spanish instructions were previously added for the NYC Civil Court. Added September 2016.
<http://www.nycourts.gov/CourtHelp/DIY/consumerdebt.shtml>.

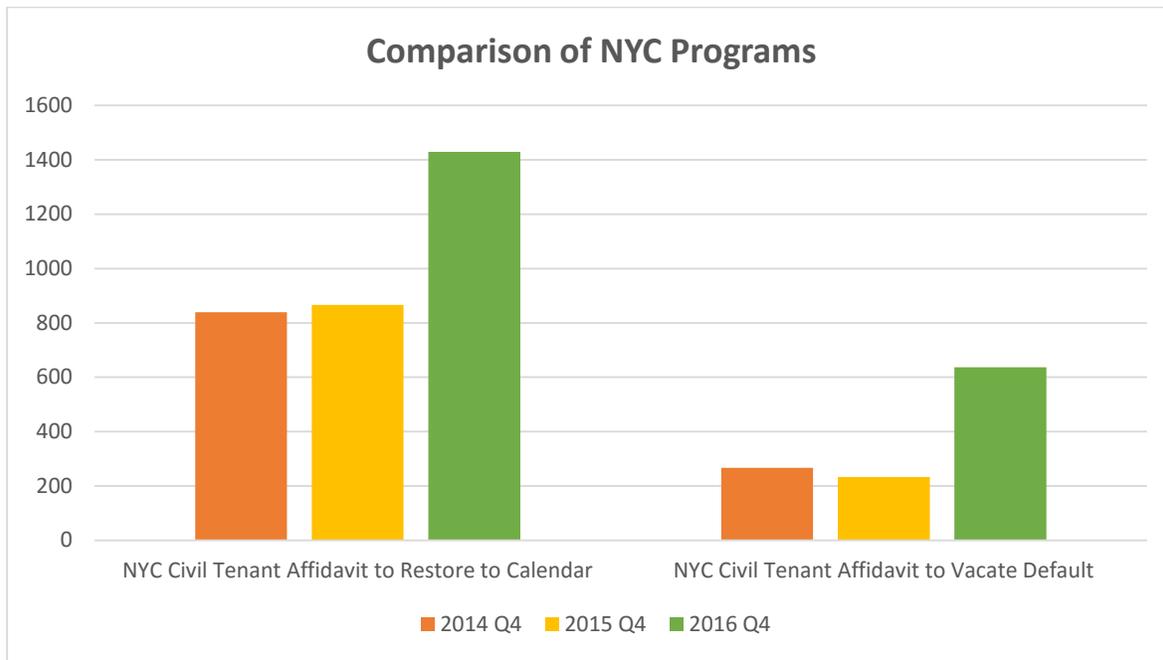
DIY FORM PROGRAM TRAINING AND PROMOTION

DIY Form personnel training and outreach have proven to be the key to the success of the DIY Form programs. The User Surveys show that staff consistently direct litigants to the programs in courthouses and over the phone. The majority of users complete the DIY Forms in a court facility such as a Clerk's Office, Help Center or law library. Since litigants primarily learn about the programs from court staff and because use of the DIY Form programs equally benefits court efficiency, the Access to Justice Program focuses considerable time and energy on training and outreach to court staff.

In 2016, eight new training videos were recorded on each of the Family and Surrogate's Court DIY Form programs. The videos are posted on the Access to Justice Program's intranet website for Family and Surrogate's Court staff to familiarize themselves with the programs and the UCMS screens to record DIY Form filings. In addition, as is more fully detailed in Appendix B," nine live staff trainings on the DIY Form programs were held in 2016:

- A live presentation was made at the annual Family Court Chief Clerk's meeting.
- A Child Name Change DIY Form program webinar was held open to all court personnel.
- A Skype presentation was made for the 4th JD Surrogate's Court Chief Clerks.
- A private webinar was given for the Kings County Surrogate's Court staff on the Small Estate DIY Form program.
- A webinar was held on the Uncontested Divorce DIY Form program open to all court personnel.
- A webinar was held on the Landlord-Tenant DIY Form programs for outside NYC.
- A webinar was held on the Adult and Child Name Change DIY Form programs open to all court personnel.
- A webinar was held on the Vacate Default Judgment Consumer Debt DIY Form program open to all court personnel.

- In Q3 of 2016, a live presentation was made to the upper-level Civil Court Clerks on “How DIY Form Programs Can increase Court Efficiency.” Following this presentation, there was a marked improvement in the usage of a number of the NYC Civil Court Programs.



Several public trainings were held on the DIY Form programs, including training for the Court Navigators to assist litigants in the Clerk’s Offices (see Part I: Meaning Access Through Court-Based Programs). DIY Form program information was updated in the Public Librarian Portfolios (see Part VII, under Publications).

DIY postcards were distributed at the annual Family, Surrogate’s and City Court Chief Clerk’s meetings, disseminated to the public at community events, law day celebrations and information fairs and mailings were made to various Courts, including a number of Town and Village Courts. The statewide multi-program DIY Form postcard originally created in 2009, was updated to add the availability of programs for landlords and tenants in addition to Family, Supreme and Surrogate’s Court programs. A copy of the old and new back of the multi-program postcard is attached as Appendix E.

Twitter was used to promote the DIY Forms programs. In addition to periodic tweets about the various programs, #FeedbackFriday user comments were tweeted on most Fridays with links to the programs on CourtHelp. When the new Spanish resources were launched during Hispanic Heritage Month, a tweet announcing the new features garnered

Celebrate [#HispanicHeritageMonth](#) with us, see our new [#Spanish](#) resources for the [#DIY](#) programs! [#courtforms](#)
nycourts.gov/CourtHelp/DIY/index_spanish.shtml [@probono](#)

@NYCourtsA2J tweet, Oct. 2016

5,261 impressions and 13 retweets.

ADVOCATE FAMILY OFFENSE PETITION PROGRAM

In 2016, over 51,500 Family Offense Petitions were filed in New York State Family Courts seeking orders of protection. Domestic violence has serious ramifications and the victims are in great need of advice and information to protect their safety. The New York State court system's Advocate Family Offense Petition Program allows trained domestic violence advocates and legal services providers to deliver the guidance required in these delicate scenarios and easily assist unrepresented litigants with completing the Family Offense Petition and Address Confidentiality Affidavit, if needed. The Access to Justice Program built the Family Offense Petition document assembly program to provide a much faster method of interviewing a litigant and producing court papers. The document assembly program produces one or multiple court forms for the litigant, depending on which forms the advocate deems are required. Information only has to be input once regardless of how many times it may appear in the papers produced.

The document assembly program is available to any domestic violence advocacy group and legal services provider once they have been trained and approved by New York State court system personnel. Access to the program is only available through Pro Bono Net's Family Justice/DV practice area (http://www.probono.net/ny/family/fop_project/ membership and password required). Advocates must also join LawHelp Interactive to use the program, which is free. The program was purposely not developed as a DIY Form program for self-help to ensure that domestic violence victims get the support they need due to domestic violence's inherent safety dangers.

The data collected in the HotDocs document assembly program is electronically transferred from LawHelp Interactive to the Family Court's Universal Case Management System. The petition is not filed until the litigant or the advocate brings the signed Family Offense Petition into court. The electronic transfer of data directly into the Family Court's case management system is a major improvement in courthouse efficiency and eliminates hours of data entry time for Court Clerks and wait time for litigants.

In 2016, based on feedback from advocates and court employees, the program was updated to enable an advocate group to e-share the papers with a Family Court in a different county from the one in which the group is located. The option to request a telephone appearance or a specific time for a hearing, was also expanded adding an additional five counties outside of New York City: Columbia, Oneida, Onondaga, Suffolk and Sullivan Family Courts. This option is only available for elderly or mobility challenged petitioners where it would be a hardship for them to appear in court. New York City Family Courts have been offering this option since the program was launched in 2011. A webinar was held for Family Court Chief Clerks to showcase this feature and how it was currently being used in New York City. (See Appendix B.) The program was

also showcased at the New York Statewide Civil Legal Aid Technology Conference Tech Fair.

In 2015, the New York State Legislature authorized a pilot program allowing remote video appearances for those who cannot appear in person for safety or health reasons. In preparation for a 2017 eight county pilot, the Access to Justice Program updated the program with multiple new fields to enable requests for video appearances. The generated petition and instruction sheet were also modified. An onscreen petitioner's affirmation screen was also added to the program for those requesting a remote appearance. In addition, as part of the pilot program, the Department of Technology added functionality to the Family Court case management system so that court staff can view the pdf of the generated petition. The Office of Family Violence Cases is overseeing the pilot project.

Five new domestic violence advocacy organizations were approved in 2016 to use the program, making a total of 146 approved organizations across New York's 62 counties. Approximately 7,000 petitions were e-filed and docketed throughout New York State, up 11% from 2105 (6308 docketed).

ADVOCATE CONSUMER DEBT VACATE DEFAULT JUDGMENT PROGRAM

The Access to Justice Program's advocate document assembly program is a HotDocs version of the Consumer Debt Vacate Default Judgment DIY Form program which prepares papers seeking to vacate default judgments for failure to answer or appear in consumer debt cases. The advocate program helps New York City consumer debt attorneys prepare pleadings much faster when assisting a litigant. The advocate program does not contain explanatory screens and allows the user to view several fields of information at once. The program is password protected to prevent litigants from using the advocate program instead of the DIY Form version. The Advocate Consumer Debt Vacate Default Judgment Program is used by New York City consumer debt attorneys associated with consumer advocate groups in the New York City Consumer Debt Consortium, as well as the Access to Justice Program's VLP - Consumer Debt attorneys.

In 2016, the program was updated to clarify CPLR 5015(a)1 and 4 relief, that is excusable default and lack of jurisdiction. The program was showcased at the New York Statewide Civil Legal Aid Technology Conference Tech Fair. Papers were generated in approximately 140 cases by five advocate groups in New York City.

E-FILING UNREPRESENTED LITIGANT WEBSITE

Over the past decade, the New York State court system has been working on establishing a statewide electronic filing system, known as "NYSCEF," New York State Courts Electronic Filing. Presently, NYSCEF permits the filing of legal papers by

electronic means in certain courts, case types and counties. (See <https://iappscontent.courts.state.ny.us/NYSCEF/live/authorizedForEfiling.htm>.) An attorney's use of the NYSCEF system is either mandatory or consensual depending on the county. An attorney served with notice of an e-filed case must either decline or consent. Unrepresented litigants are automatically exempt from e-filing. Attorneys can earn CLE credits by attending e-filing training classes and can set-up accounts to regularly e-file all their cases through the NYSCEF system available at <http://www.nycourts.gov/efile>. Unrepresented litigants must set-up a new account to e-file in each case. Attorneys and unrepresented litigants can use the NYSCEF system for free.

In 2015, the Access to Justice Program worked with NYSCEF and the Department of Technology to create an e-filing website for unrepresented litigants to streamline the process and explain the e-filing procedure in simple terms that non-attorneys can better understand. The new website explains the basics of e-filing to help a litigant decide whether e-filing is right for him or her. The website clarifies the procedure for setting up an account to start a case or e-file in an existing case. In addition, the website contains content explaining what is needed before logging in, including information about motions, fee waivers and document redaction. The website also contains helpful links to explain terms, find forms and find live assistance. The e-filing website for unrepresented litigants was launched in early 2016: <http://www.nycourts.gov/efile-unrepresented>. The Access to Justice Program held trainings for the E-filing Resource Center staff and for the Help Center personnel and Public Access Law Librarians to familiarize them with the new site to better assist litigants. (See Appendix B.)

UNBUNDLED LEGAL SERVICES ETHICS VIDEO

Unbundled legal services, also known as limited scope, is a practice where the lawyer performs only the agreed upon tasks, rather than the whole "bundle" of the work required in traditional full service representation. The litigant then performs the remaining tasks on his or her own. Unbundled legal services can be an ideal legal services delivery method in appropriate cases when it is done competently and ethically. It is essential that the client understands the scope of the representation and gives his or her informed consent. Accordingly, it is the Access to Justice Program policy that training on the ethics of providing unbundled representation is included in every Access to Justice Program unbundled volunteer lawyer program.

In 2016, the Access to Justice Program developed for the American Bar Association Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service and the NYS Bar Association an online ethics training component for lawyers volunteering with Free Legal Answers in New York. Free Legal Answers is a virtual legal advice clinic. Income-eligible users post their civil legal question online. Users are emailed when their question receives a response. Registered attorney volunteers log in to the website, select questions to answer, and provide civil legal information and advice. Question topics cover a range of categories including consumer debt, personal injury, worker's compensation, school

discipline, housing, and family law issues. See Free Legal Answers at <https://ny.freelegalanswers.org>.

As a prerequisite to volunteering for Free Legal Answers in New York, all attorneys are required to watch a six-and-a-half-minute video entitled “Ethical Considerations When Providing Limited Scope Services On-line,” which was developed by Justice Fern A. Fisher: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B0LErnJ4FkBFTXI1OWIteFhrSTQ/view>. Attorneys cannot proceed with the registration process until they have viewed the ethics video. The presentation, based on the American Bar Association’s model rules of professional conduct, provides an introduction to the rules of competency, an overview of the circumstances when limited scope representation is reasonable, and an explanation of informed consent, conflicts and confidentiality.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a cost effective, simple and easy means to disseminate information and reach thousands of people in a matter of moments. The Access to Justice Program has been utilizing social media to expand communications between the court system and New Yorkers since 2010. Social media platforms include:

- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/NYCourtsA2J>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NYCourtsVLP/>
- YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/NYCourtsA2J>
- Instagram: <https://instagram.com/nycourtsa2j>

All Access to Justice Program staff members utilize these social media tools as time and need permit. The New York State court system also engages in a variety of social media platforms, which are listed on <http://www.nycourts.gov/social/index.shtml>.

Each social media platform provides unrepresented litigants with a free path to information about legal services, resources and assistance. These platforms reach people who may never get information from any other delivery method. In addition, social media is an effective recruitment tool for volunteer programs and an excellent means to share resources of interest to the access to justice community. Through social media, the Access to Justice Program can reach new audiences and find new advocates in the fight for 100% meaningful access. Highlights of the Access to Justice Program’s 2016 social media usage are set forth below.

TWITTER

The Access to Justice Program utilizes Twitter to share information with a wide and varied audience. Targeted groups include the unrepresented public, volunteers, community leaders, students and access to justice partners and friends. The Access to Justice Program has tweeted a total of 1,712 times since launching in May 2010. In 2016, Twitter usage increased by 79%



over tweets in 2015 (552 times over 308 times in 2015). Followers at the year's end totaled 1,032, an increase of over 51% since 2015 (682 followers).

The New York State Court System also stepped up its use of Twitter in 2016. A listing of the Twitter accounts can be found here: <http://www.nycourts.gov/social/twitter.shtml>. The Access to Justice Program shares and retweets information with the court system's other accounts, primarily [@NYSCourtsNews](#).

Tweet topics for followers include: DIY Form programs, CourtHelp, community events, court closings and openings, locations for the Mobile Legal Help Center, important changes in the law, technology, access to justice and volunteer opportunities, trainings and contributions. The Access to Justice Program conducted live tweeting from several conferences and events in 2016, using specific hashtags to segregate the tweets, including: Self-Represented Litigants Network Conference (#SRLN16); the Technology Initiative Grant Conference (#LSCTIG), the Equal Justice Conference (#EJC16), the 2016 Statewide Civil Legal Aid Technology Conference (#A2JTechNY), and the Pro bono Week Awards Celebration (#probonoweeek).

The Access to Justice Program continued its custom begun in 2015 to tweet DIY Form program user comments on Fridays using the hashtag #FeedbackFriday with links to the programs on CourtHelp. These tweets have proven to be an effective method for promoting the programs. For example, a June tweet about the Name Change program received 6,971 impressions, a July #FeedbackFriday tweet about the Small Estate DIY Form program received 4,466 impressions and an August tweet about the Guardianship Article 17A program received 3,774 impressions. Clearly, a simple 144-character tweet is capable of reaching thousands.

In 2016, Access to Justice Program tweets earned approximately 210,000 impressions. There is no doubt that Twitter is a powerful and cost effective mechanism to assist in the goal of providing 100% access to justice.

FACEBOOK

The Access to Justice Program utilizes Facebook differently than other social media outlets. The general public is not part of the target audience. Facebook is primarily used to recruit volunteer lawyers and non-lawyers and a way to recognize their volunteer efforts. It provides a central location for posting information for volunteers in multiple programs.



In 2016, the Access to Justice Program's Volunteer Lawyer Program Facebook page continued its steady increase. "Likes" for the page rose to 686, an increase of 102 likes from 2015. The majority of the people who like the page are between 25 and 44. The Access to Justice Program's 46 posts were seen over 12,600 times.

In addition to promoting volunteerism, links to relevant articles about pro bono service, public interest job opportunities and internships, and student news are shared on Facebook. For example, a May post about Justice Sonia Sotomayor where she said, ““If I had my way, I would make pro bono service a requirement,” reached 507 unique users and a post for a family law attorney job opportunity reached 781 unique users.

The Access to Justice Program also uses Facebook to acknowledge volunteer contributions. One of the most popular posts every year is the photo gallery from the Pro Bono Awards Night (which reached 1,138 unique users in 2016). Like Twitter, it takes only seconds to write and post information on Facebook, reaping significant reward for the investment of time.

PART III: MEANINGFUL ACCESS IN THE COMMUNITY

Bringing information and services directly into the community accommodates multitudes of litigants who cannot easily avail themselves of court-based services. This may include litigants who are homebound, disabled, have health issues, have childcare issues, cannot afford the trip to the courthouse, live too far from the courthouse, or are uncomfortable seeking assistance unless it is brought right to their front door. Holding community events in familiar surroundings helps lower anxiety levels and facilitates the litigants' ability to digest and process information. Toward this end, the Access to Justice Program periodically hosts and attends community events, Law Day ceremonies, legal clinics and neighborhood fairs. The Access to Justice Program also strives to train community leaders through Community Leaders Roundtables and Public Librarian Programs, so resources can be shared with community members. Working with budget travel limitations, the Access to Justice Program often seeks out partners to help deliver legal information and assistance directly into communities. An overview of community outreach efforts conducted in 2016 is set forth below.



MOBILE LEGAL HELP CENTER

A Mobile Legal Help Center (MLHC) is a legal services office and courtroom on wheels. The MLHC is an ideal delivery mechanism to bring assistance straight to the community. Aboard the MLHC, unrepresented litigants can receive information, unbundled advice and counseling, assistance with document preparation, and direct representation without leaving the vehicle. The vehicle is equipped with high-speed Internet and state-of-the-art technology. A video link with the courts enables access to judges for emergency hearings, including domestic violence and eviction cases.

In 2012, the Access to Justice Program and NYLAG partnered to create New York's first-ever Mobile Legal Help Center. In 2016, the Access to Justice Program continued to work with NYLAG and facilitate communication between the courts and the MLHC by assisting with updating technology, scheduling, securing overnight parking for the MLHC, troubleshooting and training court staff to be available for any immediate assistance with interpreting, family offence petitions or procedural information. The MLHC traveled throughout the five boroughs in New York City and Nassau and Suffolk Counties, focusing on hard to reach areas with limited public transportation. In honor of National Law Day, the MLHC was stationed outside the event in Bronx County. During National Pro Bono Celebration Week, NYLAG and the Access to Justice Program brought the MLHC to provide information to elderly gay seniors in Queens County. Attorneys provided legal advice to 14 individuals primarily on advance planning, living wills and powers of attorney. The MLHC, staffed by NYLAG employees, assisted nearly 1,400 New Yorkers between January 1 and October 31, 2016. Litigants were helped with various civil legal services needs, including consumer finance; education law; employment law; family law; health law; housing/foreclosures; income maintenance (includes social security and public benefits); immigration/naturalization; advance

directives and wills; and more. Community members were provided with legal information, referrals, consultations, and full legal representation. The Mobile Legal Help Center is publicized by community partners and through Facebook, Twitter, the NYLAG website and the Access to Justice Program's website at http://www.nycourts.gov/ip/nya2j/Courts_Community_Center/mobilelegalhelpcenter.shtml.

In 2016, The Access to Justice Program Community Outreach Director worked with the Director of the NYS Office for the Aging, Legal Services Initiative to explore launching Mobile Legal Help Centers to travel throughout the Southern Tier, Western New York and the North Country of upstate New York. The Legal Services Initiative contacted the Access to Justice Program to address the challenges that limit the ability of individuals to access legal assistance, such as, lack of transportation, mobility limitations, physical and mental disabilities, language barriers, and fear of deportation due to immigration status. The Access to Justice Program shared detailed information about the process that went into launching the first MLHC, arranged for the Legal Services Initiative to tour the mobile help center and brought NYLAG into the planning. Thereafter, the Access to Justice Community Outreach Director, along with the NYLAG MLHC Supervising Attorney made live presentations at three regional meetings. The Access to Justice Program provided detailed information about the design, purchase, maintenance, staffing, and operational aspects of a MLHC to interested potential partners in each region. Various ideas were discussed about how the vehicle could be used to provide an array of legal services and possibilities for partnering with other agencies to deliver multiple services at one time. (See Appendix A for more information.)

“Thank you for traveling upstate to share your experiences and knowledge about the Mobile Legal Help Center...Between your presentations and the materials you had shared earlier the participants have a good base for moving forward with considering the Mobile Center as an option for their area.”

NYSOFA Legal Services Initiative, Sept. 2016

Following each regional presentation, community coalitions were formed for each Mobile Legal Help Center Replication Project. The coalitions will further develop and strategize ways to move each Project forward. Coalitions include the legal community, local courts, caregivers, social service agencies, and other networks. The coalitions are exploring funding sources and assessing the availability of legal assistance providers to travel to underserved neighborhoods and rural areas in each jurisdiction.

COURT TOURS AND VISITS

The Access to Justice Program oversees the Court Tours Program in New York State. Court Tours are an excellent opportunity for the public to become familiar with the court system by observing the jury and trial process, learning about different types of cases and careers in the courts, and by touring a courthouse. Visiting a court in session and

having an opportunity to ask questions helps demystify the justice system, lessen the apprehension that lay people sometimes experience, and promote public confidence in the judiciary. On a court tour, written information, instructional materials, and promotional items are distributed.

In 2016, the Access to Justice Program continued to receive a high volume of requests for tours from various community organizations. Thousands of student groups visited the courts, including, elementary, middle and high schools, colleges, law schools, summer youth programs, and internship programs. In addition, international groups from all over the world requested tours of the New York State Courts. In 2016, delegations visited from Bulgaria, Romania, Spain, Denmark, Norway, China, Korea, The Netherlands, Argentina, Cambodia, Nepal, Saudi Arabia, and Sweden. Information on requesting a court tour is available on the Access to Justice Program website: http://nycourts.gov/ip/nya2j/Courts_Community_Center/index.shtml.

“Thank you so much for the guided tour of the courthouse. It was the perfect conclusion to our unit on criminal procedure and evidence.”

Teacher Visitor, NY Co. Oct. 2016

COMMUNITY LAW DAY

Recognizing the importance of law in the foundation of the United States of America and our society, May 1st is our country’s official National Law Day. In celebration of the day, the Access to Justice Program sponsors and hosts annual Community Law Day events. These celebrations offer New York residents the opportunity to receive legal advice and information from experienced attorneys and organizations, free of charge. Music, entertainment and refreshments make Community Law Day not just a legal information fair but a festive social event. More information can be found on the Access to Justice Program’s website at http://www.nycourts.gov/ip/nya2j/Courts_Community_Center/lawday.shtml.

In 2016, the Access to Justice Program commemorated National Law Day by hosting a Community Law Day in Bronx County. Due to the rain, the event, complete with balloons, refreshments and free giveaways, was held indoors at the Supreme Court. Over 200 people attended the event. Safe Horizon, Human Resources Administration, LIFT and The Legal Aid Society were just a few of the 22 participating government and community agencies that gathered indoors to take part in the 2 ½ hour event. The Mobile Legal Help Center was stationed outside of the Bronx County Supreme Court staffed with NYLAG volunteer lawyers who provided legal advice and referrals to a half dozen litigants on their immigration, housing, employment and family law cases.

Many similar law day celebrations were held in other counties. (See Appendix F: Access to Justice Efforts Throughout New York State.)

COMMUNITY LEADERS ROUNDTABLE

From time to time, the Access to Justice Program conducts roundtable discussions with New York City community leaders to provide information for participants to bring back to members of their community, senior citizen centers, community-based organizations, religious congregations, and local officials. The roundtable discussions are an important resource for community leaders and the court system and an excellent means of disseminating information to assist unrepresented litigants and improve access to justice. When people have questions and are in need they often turn to community leaders for assistance. The roundtables educate the community leaders about available tools and resources. The roundtable discussions also provide community leaders with a forum to share their concerns of their constituents. In 2016, the Access to Justice Program partnered with the Interfaith Center of New York to host a roundtable discussion at the New York County Civil Court during National Pro Bono Celebration Week. Information was shared about court services and resources, including Court Tours, the Speakers Bureau, the Mobile Legal Help Center and Community Seminars. (See Appendix A.)

PUBLIC LIBRARIANS' PROGRAM

Public libraries and librarians play an essential role in promoting and ensuring the public's access to justice as they are often the first contact the public turns to for information regarding legal matters. Library patrons often visit public libraries to access free internet services. With the intent of reaching out into the community beyond the courthouse, in 2010, the NYS Courts Access to Justice Outreach Program developed a program for public librarians throughout New York State called "Opening Courthouse Doors." The goal was to equip public librarians with legal resources to assist their patrons. In conjunction with the outreach program, librarian portfolios tailored to each judicial district were created and posted on the internet. In 2016, the Access to Justice Program updated the librarian portfolios (see Part VII, under Publications). In addition, the Access to Justice Program worked with the Permanent Commission on Access to Justice to continue its outreach efforts to the public libraries. (See Part VI: Work With the Permanent Commission on Access to Justice.)

PART IV: SUPPORTING PRO BONO BY NEW AND EXPERIENCED ATTORNEYS

The Access to Justice Program seeks participation from all New York attorneys, young and old. Along with the Feerick Center for Social Justice, the Access to Justice Program furthers retired lawyer participation in the Attorney Emeritus Program (AEP). Through Appellate Division Student Practice Orders and partnerships and participation from area law schools, the Access to Justice Program utilizes and encourages law student pro bono contributions. An award ceremony is held each year during National Pro Bono Celebration Week to thank the many devoted volunteers who go above and beyond by providing legal services. These attorneys are recognized in Part VIII and in the Partners, Friends and Volunteers section in the back pages of this Report.

ATTORNEY EMERITUS PROGRAM

Another solution to providing 100% access to justice is to involve the retired attorney work force. The Attorney *Emeritus* Program (AEP), created by Former Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman in 2010, successfully utilizes New York's experienced senior attorneys and facilitates their pro bono service by drawing them into new areas of law and matching them with volunteer host organizations. The Access to Justice Program, along with Fordham Law School's Feerick Center for Social Justice, oversee the Attorney *Emeritus* Program, where volunteer retired attorneys assist litigants with an array of legal issues. Attorneys over the age of 55 commit to provide 60 hours over two years of legal services assistance to some of the many individuals unable to afford an attorney to assist them with their urgent legal matters. The over 300 different volunteer opportunities in AEP include a wide variety of delivery systems – one-on-one full representation, unbundled legal advice, mentoring, or coaching others. Opportunities are available in counties all around New York State, each in partnership with a significant civil legal services organization that provides training and supervision for every attorney. Attorneys who still actively practice law may also earn up to 15 of their 24 mandated CLE credits by doing pro bono work.



The costs required to sustain the administration of the AEP are minimal. The Access to Justice Program provides administrative support and oversight of the AEP. The Feerick Center for Social Justice provides administrative and programmatic support. Through grants obtained from the Corporation for National and Community Service, the Feerick Center is able to utilize a full-time AmeriCorps VISTA staff member. In the past, NYC Civic Corps members also worked at the Feerick Center. Four permanent Feerick Center staff members also devote a portion of their time to the AEP, rounding out to the equivalent of one full-time employee.

In 2016, the number of AEP volunteers continued to increase, totaling over 1,840 lawyers since the program began in 2010. AEP volunteers throughout New York State

are making significant contributions of pro bono service. For example, the New York State IOLA Fund reports that, in 2015-2016, 33 of their grantees had 87 AEP volunteers who served over 11,000 hours and closed 1,245 cases. Each time a volunteer's 60-hour commitment is completed, recognition is provided by both the Access to Justice Program Director, Justice Fern A. Fisher and Chief Judge Janet DiFiore in the form of a personal letter of thanks for the important contribution that the lawyer has made to the effort to provide access to justice.

The AEP Program greatly benefitted from the involvement of law firms, which have signed "Statements of Participation" and pledged to lend logistical and staff support to AEP volunteers at their firms. These law firms include Bond, Schoeneck & King PLLC; Chadbourne & Parke LLP; Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP; Debevoise & Plimpton LLP; Hiscock & Barclay; Hogan Lovells; Hughes Hubbard & Reed LLP; Kaye Scholer LLP; Lavelle & Finn, LLP; Proskauer Rose LLP; Reed Smith LLP; Simpson, Thacher & Bartlett; Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP and Affiliates; Sullivan & Cromwell; Weil, Gotshal & Manges; and Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP. Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP graciously hosted an AEP information session at their law firm.

"My experience with the AEP has helped me continue to 'do good' in retirement... I have spent the last 3 years volunteering with the Incarcerated Mothers Law Project. We work with imprisoned women to advise them of their rights and responsibilities with respect to their children and advocate on their behalf. I had no prior experience in Family Law, but the staff at Volunteers of Legal Service . . . provided excellent training and support. And the experience ...has made me so proud to be part of this initiative."

AEP volunteer, Westchester Co. Jan., 2016

Four new AEP host organizations were added in 2016, including Catholic Migration Services, Empire Justice Center, Public Utility Law Project of New York, Inc., and Safe Passage Project. A substantial amount of changes were also made to the AEP website, bringing the webpages up to date and making the website much easier to navigate. The AEP maintains webpages for interested attorneys at <http://www.nycourts.gov/attorneys/volunteer/emeritus/>. Attorneys can search for opportunities by location. The AEP pro bono opportunities are also listed on Pro Bono Net.

LAW STUDENT, LAW GRADUATE AND NEW LAWYER INITIATIVES

The Access to Justice Program involves law students, law graduates awaiting admission to the New York Bar, and new lawyers, in public service early in their legal careers by encouraging their participation in court-based volunteer programs. The goal is to instill a life-long interest and dedication to pro bono work. Under this initiative, law students and recent law graduates provide legal advice and limited scope representation to unrepresented litigants in consumer debt, landlord-tenant,

uncontested divorce and family law matters in New York City's Civil, Family and Supreme Courts. These volunteer opportunities help law students and recent law graduates make the transition from law student to law practice, while providing meaningful access to justice for the thousands of unrepresented litigants.

Since 2009, law graduates and law students who have completed at least two semesters of law school are permitted to participate in the court-based volunteer programs through student Practice Orders of the Appellate Divisions of the First and Second Departments. The Practice Orders authorize a program of activities for law students and law graduates awaiting admission to the New York State Bar, as long as they act under the supervision of the Access to Justice Program. The Practice Orders can be found at

http://nycourts.gov/attorneys/volunteer/vap/pdfs/StudentPractice_1stDept.pdf and http://nycourts.gov/attorneys/volunteer/vap/pdfs/StudentPractice_2ndDept.pdf.

The Access to Justice Program continued to recruit individual students from New York City area law schools through social media, volunteer postings, law graduate fellowships, law student internship public service programs and law school clinical programs. In 2016, this general recruitment led to law student and law graduate participation from nine area law schools: Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, Brooklyn Law School, Columbia Law School, CUNY School of Law, Fordham University School of Law, Hofstra Law School, New York Law School, St. John's University School of Law and Touro College Jacob D. Fuchsberg Law Center (Touro Law Center). The students and law graduates participated in all of the court-based unbundled programs. The Access to Justice Program also utilized foreign LLM students from New York University Law School, New York Law School and Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law in its consumer debt and uncontested divorce programs.

Recruitment of recent law graduates and new lawyers was further facilitated through the Access to Justice Program's popular Bridge-the-Gap CLE trainings in 2016 (see Appendix A). For the sixth year in a row, the program presented two free Bridge-the-Gap pro bono trainings where law graduates are able to fulfill their CLE requirements, fulfill their 50-hour pro bono service requirements, and obtain supervised practical legal experience assisting unrepresented litigants in New York City Housing, Civil, Family and Supreme Courts with their housing, family, consumer debt and uncontested divorce cases. Since the Bridge-the-Gap CLE trainings began over 900 recent law school graduates and newly admitted attorneys have signed up for this CLE series and provided pro bono service to more than 7,500 litigants. All participants in the court-based volunteer programs gain invaluable experience while helping some of New York's most disadvantaged civil litigants obtain access to justice.

Through a collaboration initiated in 2015, St. John's Law School's St. Vincent de Paul Legal Program via its Consumer Justice for the Elderly Litigation Clinic operates a law school clinic program to provide VLFD - Consumer Debt Program services in the *pro se* motion Part in Queens County Civil Court one morning a week. St. John's law students, under clinical faculty supervision, represent low-income seniors in consumer debt cases

in the courtroom. The Access to Justice Program's collaboration with Fordham Law School's Lincoln Square Legal Services clinic continued where law students participated in the VLFD - Consumer Debt Program one morning a week in New York County Civil Court handling *pro se* motions under the supervision of a clinic professor.

"I want to thank you for the opportunity to work in the Access to Justice Program this summer; it was an extremely educational and satisfying experience."

*Law Student Volunteer,
Bronx Co., Aug. 2016*

In conjunction with a 2016 judiciary civil legal services grant, the Access to Justice Program conducted special initiatives in collaboration with three New York City law schools: CUNY Law School, St. John's Law School and Touro Law Center. The purpose of the grant is to jointly develop and further expand capacity and expertise for training and supervision of law students and recent law school graduates to provide pro bono civil legal services to low-income New Yorkers. Legal services were provided in existing court-based programs in the areas of uncontested divorce, landlord-tenant and consumer debt law. These initiatives work with the Access to Justice Program to coordinate training, recruitment and supervision of pro bono efforts across law schools enlisting significant numbers of students and recent graduates, and facilitates best practices for addressing areas of unmet need that would be difficult for a single law school to match if acting in isolation.

Under the grant, students and graduates of Touro Law Center provided services in uncontested divorce and housing law and on the New York Legal Assistance Group's (NYLAG's) Mobile Legal Help Center in Suffolk County. St. John's Law School students and graduates provided assistance in uncontested divorce in Queens County Supreme Court two days a week, and provided limited representation to consumer debtors in Queens County Civil Court two days a week. CUNY Law School students and graduates provided limited representation to tenants in Kings County Housing Court two days a week, assistance in uncontested divorce in the Queens County Supreme Court two days a week, and limited representation to consumer debtors in the Kings and Queens County Civil Courts two days a week. (See trainings listed in Appendix A.)

The Access to Justice Program also conducted training for Touro Law Center first year students on what is it like for people living in poverty. The Poverty Simulation strives to educate and sensitize students about the effects of economic disadvantage on the justice system. More information about the Poverty Simulation is described in Part VII.

Through participation in Access to Justice Program court-based programs and trainings, law students, law graduates and new lawyers become more effective lawyers who give back to their communities.

PART V: SIMPLIFICATION OF FORMS

Possibly the single most important step toward providing meaningful access to justice is the simplification of court forms. A litigant cannot start a case, answer a case, or seek any kind of relief in the court system without first preparing a written document. This presents a myriad of challenges for most non-lawyers. Lack of legal knowledge, limited English proficiency, poor reading comprehension, and mental or physical disabilities are just some of the hurdles that people may face when trying to prepare their court papers. Providing court forms in “plain language” greatly helps unrepresented people use the justice system. Plain language is a method of writing, organizing and designing court forms so that the information is easier to read and understand. In 2016, the Access to Justice Program worked on a number of plain language projects in the court system.

ORDER APPOINTING GUARDIAN AD LITEM IN NYC HOUSING PROCEEDINGS

The Access to Justice Program updated the Order Appointing a Guardian Ad Litem (CIV-GP-112) to make it clearer to the ward what the appointment means. The litigants in these proceedings are from the city’s most vulnerable population. Many are confused by the court proceedings and are in danger of losing their homes. Accordingly, it is extremely important that the order appointing a GAL is written in plain language. The new order is divided into bolded subheadings with numbered paragraphs to provide information in an easy digestible format. The order contains a new section on the duties of the GAL so all parties understand what the GAL does and does not do. Copies of the old and new orders are annexed as Appendix G. More information on the GAL Program is contained in Part I.

E-FILING NOTICES

The Access to Justice Program worked with the New York State Courts E-filing System (NYSCEF) on simplification of the mandatory and consensual e-filing notices that are required to be served when a party starts a case using the NYSCEF system (EF-3 and EFM-1). The existing forms are confusing to unrepresented litigants (see e.g. current Supreme Court EF-3 form available at <https://iappscontent.courts.state.ny.us/NYSCEF/live/forms/notice.of.availability.pdf>). The Access to Justice Program’s proposed revision of these forms are pending approval.

FORECLOSURE FORMS

New foreclosure legislation, effective December 20, 2016, amended CPLR 3408 and expanded the Court’s responsibilities at mandatory foreclosure settlement conferences. Specifically, the Court is required to advise defendants who appear at the first settlement conference of their new right to file an Answer within 30 days of the first

conference. To comply with the new laws, the Office of Policy and Planning developed information packets to be distributed to homeowners at the first conference, as well as a bench card for judges and court personnel to use when explaining the answer requirement to homeowners. The Access to Justice Program worked with the Office of Policy and Planning on plain language versions of the new information sheet, “Answering a Foreclosure Complaint,” and the language in the bench card. The information sheet explains the answering process in a simple question and answer format. It also includes information on where to find additional assistance. The Answering a Foreclosure Complaint information sheet is available on CourtHelp at <http://nycourts.gov/courthelp/pdfs/forms/AnsweringForeclosure.pdf>.

NOTICE OF PETITION FOR NYC NONPAYMENT PROCEEDINGS

The Access to Justice Program drafted a new form to amend section 208.42(d) of the Uniform Rules of the New York City Civil Court which sets forth an example of a Notice of Petition form to be used in a proceeding brought pursuant to RPAPL section 732 on the ground that the respondent has defaulted in the payment of rent (see <http://www.nycourts.gov/rules/trialcourts/208.shtml#42>). The current form is written at an above college reading level. Feedback from Help Center personnel reveals that many respondents mistake the Notice of Petition for an eviction notice and believe they have to vacate their homes. The proposed plain language mandatory form reduces the language to a 7th grade reading level and explains legal procedures, such as the answering process, raising defenses and rent deposits. Difficult concepts are stated in simple short sentences, employ an active voice, personal pronouns, and common, everyday words. The proposed Notice of Petition advises tenants of their rights and interests under the law and includes contact information for legal and rental assistance, as well as interpreters and ADA liaisons. Most significantly, it requires that an information sheet on answering a nonpayment Petition be delivered to the tenant when the Notice of Petition and Petition are served. At the end of 2016, the proposed amendment was posted for public comment: <http://www.nycourts.gov/rules/comments/index.shtml>.

ORDER OF PROTECTION IN FAMILY OFFENSE PROCEEDINGS

The Access to Justice Program drafted a plain language version of the Order of Protection form GF-5a, which is issued when there is a finding that the defendant has committed an offense and the petitioner needs protection from the respondent. The Order of Protection sets specific conditions of behavior for the respondent. This draft was written in plain language, clearly formatted with section headings, numbered paragraphs, larger font size, and line spacing, and addresses the respondent in the second person. The mandatory notices in the Order of Protection were rewritten in plain language where possible to clearly indicate to the Respondent not to contact the

Petitioner, the enforceability of the order, and the consequences of violating the order. The current Order of Protection reads at a 14.5 grade level - <http://nycourts.gov/forms/familycourt/pdfs/gf-5a.pdf>. The proposed order, not including the language of the mandatory notices, reads at a 9.2 grade level. This form is pending before the Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee's subcommittee.

LANDLORD-TENANT POSTCARD NOTICE

Pursuant to section 208.42(d) of the Uniform Rules of the New York City Civil Court, landlords commencing nonpayment and holdover eviction proceedings in Housing Court are required to submit stamped postcards to the Court Clerk for the court to mail to the tenant as additional notice of the court case. The postcard language in English and Spanish is contained in the Court rules. The Access to Justice Program worked with the Permanent Commission on Access to Justice to simplify the postcard language, take the text out of block capital letters that are more difficult to read, and to add links to online helpful information and translations. The new language goes into effect on March 1, 2017.

Old Nonpayment Postcard Text:

PAPERS HAVE BEEN SENT TO YOU AND FILED IN COURT ASKING THIS COURT TO EVICT YOU FROM YOUR RESIDENCE. YOU MUST APPEAR IN COURT AND FILE AN ANSWER TO THE LANDLORD'S CLAIM. IF YOU HAVE NOT RECEIVED THE PAPERS, GO TO THE HOUSING PART OF THE CIVIL COURT IMMEDIATELY AND BRING THIS CARD WITH YOU. IF YOU DO NOT APPEAR IN COURT, YOU MAY BE EVICTED. YOU ALSO MAY WISH TO CONTACT AN ATTORNEY.

DOCUMENTOS HAN SIDO ENVIADOS A UD. Y REGISTRADOS EN LA CORTE PARA DESALOJARLO DE SU RESIDENCIA. UD. TIENE QUE COMPARECER EN LA CORTE Y REGISTRAR UNA RESPUESTA A LA RECLAMACION DEL PROPIETARIO. SI NO HA RECIBIDO LOS DOCUMENTOS, VAYA A LA PARTE DE VIVIENDAS DE LA CORTE CIVIL INMEDIATAMENTE Y TRAIGA ESTA TARJETA CON USTED. SI UD. NO COMPARECE EN LA CORTE, PUEDE SER DESALOJADO. SI QUIERE PUEDE PONERSE EN CONTACTO CON UN ABOGADO.

New Nonpayment Postcard Text:

Your landlord has started a court case to evict you from your home. Come to the Landlord & Tenant Clerk's Office in the Civil Court right away to answer the landlord's papers. If you didn't get any papers, bring this card.

For information on evictions and court forms in different languages, go to nycourts.gov/housingnyc. It is helpful to speak to an attorney.

Important! If you don't come to court, you may be evicted.

Su casero ha iniciado un caso judicial para desalojarle de su hogar. Venga de inmediato a las oficinas de la Secretaría del Tribunal de Caseros e Inquilinos, en el Tribunal Civil, para contestar los documentos del casero. Si no recibió ningún documento, traiga esta tarjeta postal.

Para información sobre desalojos y formularios en diferentes idiomas, vaya a nycourts.gov/housingnyc. Puede serle útil hablar con un abogado.

¡Importante! Si no viene al tribunal, usted puede ser desalojado/a.

The Civil Court provides landlords who use the New York City Nonpayment Petition DIY Form Program to create their court papers with the postcards. When the rule goes into effect, CIV-LT-110 DIY (HO) and CIV-LT-111 DIY (NP) will be updated.

The Access to Justice Program also worked with the Permanent Commission to draft plain language postcards for a pilot project outside New York City when landlords commence eviction proceedings in Elmira, Saratoga and Kingston City Courts and Nassau County District Court. (See Part VI: Work with the Permanent Commission on Access to Justice.)

PART VI: WORK WITH THE PERMANENT COMMISSION ON ACCESS TO JUSTICE

The Permanent Commission on Access to Justice was established in 2015 to continue the work of the Task Force to Expand Access to Civil Legal Services in New York. The Permanent Commission operates under the leadership of Helaine M. Barnett and is comprised of representatives from the court, business community, government, private bar, legal services, pro bono providers, law schools, and funders. The Permanent Commission works to identify the extent to which low-income New Yorkers are unrepresented in matters affecting the essentials of life, explores and proposes means to address the justice gap, and oversees the civil legal services funding provided through the Judiciary's budget. The Permanent Commission also collaborates on access to justice issues, including expanded pro bono services and help for unrepresented litigants, with the Access to Justice Program. More information is available at <http://www.nycourts.gov/accesstojusticecommission/index.shtml>. A summary of the projects that the Access to Justice Program and the Permanent Commission worked together on in 2016 is provided in this Part.

UNBUNDLED LEGAL SERVICES

In New York, unbundled legal services have traditionally been employed by the private bar in transactional cases. However, in litigated matters, unbundled legal services were previously only sanctioned for lawyers participating in limited pro bono legal services programs. (See Rule 6.5 of the NYS Rules of Professional conduct: <http://www.nycourts.gov/rules/jointappellate/NY-Rules-Prof-Conduct-1200.pdf>.) In 2015, the Access to Justice Program, working with the NYS Bar Association, convened a conference entitled "Law a la Carte: Limited Scope Practicing for Low and Moderate Income Clients." The conference explored how unbundled legal services can be used to close the justice gap and advocated for the adoption of private bar limited scope representation in litigated matters. (See <http://www.nycourts.gov/ip/nya2j/LawALaCarte/index.shtml>.)

In 2016, the Access to Justice Program continued its efforts to facilitate unbundled legal services. Given that an estimated 1.8 million people navigate the courts each year without counsel in civil cases addressing the most fundamental matters of health, security and well-being, and that the court system has a responsibility to provide the fair administration of justice, the Access to Justice Program worked with the Permanent Commission on the expansion of unbundled legal services to the private bar. An Administrative Order was signed by Chief Administrative Judge Lawrence Marks declaring it the policy of the Unified Court System to support and encourage the practice of limited scope legal assistance in appropriate cases, and to encourage judges and justices to permit attorneys to appear for limited purposes in civil cases. Attorneys are required to complete a certified training course in limited scope representation administered by the Office of Court Administration. Forms and training will be developed in 2017. Offering limited scope assistance is another step in the effort to

offer some form of civil legal assistance to every person in need. A copy of the Chief Administrative Judge's Order is available at <http://www.nycourts.gov/attorneys/pdfs/AO-285-16-Policy%20Statement.pdf>.

ONLINE DISPUTE RESOLUTION PILOT PROJECT

The Access to Justice Program is working on the Permanent Commission's committee to develop an Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) pilot program to evaluate the feasibility, cost and effectiveness of ODR in consumer credit cases and its use as a component in improving access to justice. Ultimately, this program will allow parties to consumer debt cases to try to settle their disputes online between themselves. If a resolution cannot be reached, the parties would work online with an assigned trained mediator through the Community Dispute Resolution Centers to settle their case. An initial meeting was held in the fall of 2016 to define the evaluation framework and design of the ODR pilot program. There was discussion of the pre-existing UCS technology infrastructure, the development of procedure and rules for ODR, and an overview of currently available ODR platforms. Development and implementation of the ODR pilot program will continue in 2017.

PUBLIC LIBRARIANS' OUTREACH

In 2015, the Permanent Commission's survey of public librarians in New York confirmed that the public frequently seeks answers to legal questions at public libraries. The Access to Justice Program has had a public library outreach program since 2010 (see Part III: Meaningful Access in the Community) with tailored portfolio resources for each judicial district outside New York City, which were updated in 2016 (see Part VII, under Publications). The Access to Justice Program worked with the Permanent Commission in 2016 with the goal of creating more focused training materials and programs for New York State public librarians. The Permanent Commission deployed a survey to all court system library staff requesting information including: how often they work with local public librarians; whether librarians seek guidance on legal questions asked by the public; whether they have suggestions about how the court system could better serve the public libraries in providing legal information to the public; and what kind of training would be beneficial. From the initial responses, it is clear that public librarians are in need of educational tools. Development of the resources and training will continue in 2017.

POSTCARD NOTICE TO TENANTS

The Access to Justice Program worked with the Permanent Commission on expanding access to justice to tenants in housing proceedings throughout New York State. For tenants outside New York City, the Access to Justice Program participated in the Permanent Commission's committee on replicating the New York City practice of the Court sending additional notice to tenants when an eviction proceeding has been

commenced. The Access to Justice Program assisted with the plain language postcards for the proposed 2017 pilot project to take place in the Elmira, Kingston, and Saratoga City Courts and the Nassau County District Court. The pilot project also proposes uniform procedures for recording oral answers. The project is pending approval.

For tenants in New York City, the Access to Justice Program worked with the Permanent Commission on revising the postcard notice required by the court rules when landlord-tenant cases have been commenced. The rule change goes into effect on March 17, 2017. (See Part V: Simplification of Forms.)

STATEWIDE CIVIL LEGAL AID TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE

The Access to Justice Program worked with the Permanent Commission on its annual NYS technology conference held in partnership with NYSTech at New York Law School in New York County. The conference brought together individuals from civil legal service providers, technology experts from the legal field, law firms, law schools, the court and pro bono providers, to educate and share expertise about the use of technology in the delivery of legal assistance. The Access to Justice Program participated in the planning of the conference, presented on a panel entitled “Meeting Client Needs with User-Friendly Online Tools,” and presented information about the advocate-assisted document assembly programs at the tech fair (see Appendix A). The conference schedule and links are available on sched at <https://nystech2016.sched.com/>.

PART VII: TRAININGS, PRESENTATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

The Access to Justice Program devotes a considerable amount of time conducting trainings, making presentations, publishing written materials and sharing information via social media aimed at those who are in a position to improve access to justice for others. The Access to Justice Program reaches out to lawyers, students, members of the access to justice community, legal services providers, advocate groups, bar associations, public officials, community leaders, librarians, and court system personnel about access to justice programs and initiatives. Education is the key to increasing and strengthening awareness of the inequalities that exist in accessing the justice system and to providing the tools for assisting the unrepresented public. Understanding and heightened awareness of the obstacles that unrepresented litigants face and how they affect people entering the justice system can promote the change and support needed for measures to provide 100% meaningful access to justice.

The Access to Justice Program conducts educational programs both inside and outside the courthouse, employing a variety of training and presentation methods. Live training programs with the opportunity for discussion or hands-on use of technology are ideal. More often, technology is utilized to keep costs down and reach a greater audience across the state. For court personnel trainings, the court system has made an effort to equip most personnel with Skype access. In-house trainings are primarily conducted via webinar. Many volunteer trainings are conducted via video replay. Publications are posted on the internet.

A summary of the Access to Justice Program's 2016 trainings, presentations and publications is set forth below. A detailed chronological listing is contained in Appendix A: Public Trainings and Presentations and in Appendix B: Personnel Trainings.

VOLUNTEER TRAINING

A significant part of the Access to Justice Program's training regimen is devoted to educating program volunteers so that they are fully prepared to assist the unrepresented public. As previously noted in this Report, the Access to Justice Program regularly recruits volunteers and conducts trainings for volunteer law students, law graduates and lawyers who participate in the court-based unbundled legal services programs where they are supervised by experienced practitioners. The Access to Justice Program is an accredited CLE provider and offers free CLE in exchange for the pro bono participation. The substantive legal training and supervision help ensure that competent quality services are provided. Similarly, the Access to Justice Program regularly conducts training for the non-lawyer volunteers who provide legal information and assistance in the court-based programs. Completion of training is a pre-requisite to participation in all Access to Justice Program volunteer programs.

The Access to Justice Program offers frequent training sessions in order to keep up the cadre of qualified volunteers who give up their free time to help relieve the

unrepresented crisis. Training dates and details for the VLFD, VLP, Court Navigator, GAL, ACP Internship, VAP, and Uncontested Divorce Programs are contained in Appendix A. As can be seen, a number of Programs (GAL, VLP Housing and VLFD Housing) also offered additional trainings and workshops to existing volunteers to supplement their basic education and further hone skills.

The majority of the training is conducted in the New York County Civil Court. In 2016, a number of volunteer trainings were graciously hosted by participating area law firms, corporations, and schools, including: Columbia Law School, Dechert LLP, Kirkland & Ellis, LLP, Kramer Levin Naftalis & Frankel LLP NYLAG, Paul Hastings LLP, Proskauer Rose LLP, Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP & Affiliates, and Shearman & Sterling LLP. The trainings were conducted by a combination of court staff, program directors, judges, and volunteer attorneys from private practice or government agencies. Guest presenters graciously shared their expertise and time without compensation. (2016 presenters are included in the back of this Report under Partners, Friends and Volunteers.)

An appreciable number of hours is devoted to preparing law students, law graduates and newly admitted attorneys to participate in the court-based unbundled legal services programs and instilling a desire to continue pro bono work long into their legal careers. The Access to Justice Program partners with several participating law schools through a judiciary civil legal services grant, to teach law students the skills needed to assist the unrepresented public. Twice a year, the Access to Justice Program also offers a multi-day, multi-program Bridge-the-Gap training series, which emphasizes education of law students and new lawyers and encourages continued participation in volunteer programs. (Law student and new lawyer trainings are detailed in Appendix A.)

PERSONNEL TRAINING

Equally essential to the Access to Justice Program's training agenda is education of judicial and non-judicial court system personnel. The importance of training staff cannot be overemphasized. The men and women who tirelessly work in the notoriously short-staffed New York State court system are the public face of the court. They must be properly educated and provided with the tools needed to assist confused or bewildered litigants, many of whom are justifiably intimidated by the legal process. The Access to Justice Program offers a variety of training programs for court personnel throughout the year. Many webinar training sessions are open to all personnel. Targeted trainings are conducted for Help Center personnel, Court Clerks, public access law librarians, 1-800-COURTNY operators, Court Attorneys, and Judges.

In 2016, the Access to Justice Program held over 20 trainings for court personnel. In particular, trainings were held for employees about the CourtHelp website, the e-filing website, and the DIY Form Programs, so staff can better direct the public. Seven trainings were conducted primarily for Court Help Center staff to expand their

knowledge. (See Appendix B for a monthly listing of personnel training conducted in 2016.)

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

Public presentations are another important component of the Access to Justice Program's training efforts. Presentations about the Access to Justice Program's initiatives and current access to justice topics of concern are vital to spread the message about injustices and promote discussion and brainstorming of ideas to facilitate increased access to justice. In 2016, Justice Fern A. Fisher and the Access to Justice Program's extended staff presented at numerous conferences and webinars discussing various access to justice topics, including the future of the courts, assisting elderly or disabled litigants, civil rights and access to justice, mobile legal help centers, closing the justice gap, document assembly programs, and the Access to Justice Program's initiatives and programs. Justice Fisher even traveled to India and discussed alternative dispute resolution with court mediators. Details of all 2016 presentations are included in Appendix A.

Additionally, Justice Fisher, Chief Counsel Rochelle Klempner and Access to Justice Program staff frequently attend and learn from numerous trainings, discussions, conferences, presentations and committee meetings, both national and in New York, that work to address litigant challenges and the lack of civil legal services. Although these are not listed in this Report, the Access to Justice Program's participation and contribution in educational programs and learning from others is equally as important as sharing the Access to Justice Program's own knowledge and data. Continuing education is always needed to solve existing programs and develop new initiatives.

POVERTY SIMULATION TRAINING

According to the United States Census Report, 43.1 million people in the United States live in poverty. In New York State, nearly 3 million people live in poverty. It is imperative to recognize the limitations that people living in poverty have when interacting with the court system. Many litigants lack the resources to access transportation to the courthouse and social services agencies, let alone the ability to fully deal with their cases when they appear in court. Raising awareness and understanding through poverty simulation trainings can educate and sensitize the legal community about how economic privilege affects the justice system. Simulations encourage the provision of services in a more respectful and understanding manner.

A Poverty Simulation kit, numerous volunteers and a large space are required to hold a Poverty Simulation half-day training. Participants are assigned a fictitious identity and grouped into a family unit of one to five people. Each group represents an impoverished family and role play a one-month period living in poverty. They live four 15 minute simulated weeks during which they have to do all the things families normally do on a regular basis -- go to school or work, pay bills, grocery shop, take care of emergencies, and so forth -- essentially live life with the resources of those living at the poverty level.

They do this by interacting with the various agencies, officials and retailers found in the community – the grocer, banker, teacher, policeman, etc. After the Simulation all participants discuss and share their reflections on the experience.

For more information on the Poverty Simulation visit the Access to Justice Program’s website at <http://www.nycourts.gov/ip/nya2j/PovertySimulation.shtml>.

In 2016, for the third year in a row, the Access to Justice Program conducted Poverty Simulation training for first year law students at Touro Law Center. Touro Law Center faculty, second year and third year law students volunteered to play the roles of community groups and office staff and interacted with the “families.” A total of 73 students were trained over the half- day session. A sampling of comments from the students is posted at http://www.nycourts.gov/ip/nya2j/diverseneeds/povertysimulation_TouroLawSchool2016Nov.shtml.

“I have a better understanding of what a family may go through in an effort to survive.”

Student participant, Nov. 2016

TRAININGS FOR OTHER JURISDICTIONS

The Access to Justice Program makes every effort to share the practices that have proven successful in increasing access to justice in the New York State Courts by hosting visitors from around the world when they come to New York. Every year, live trainings and tours are conducted for other jurisdictions and access to justice advocates in an effort to provide guidance for court systems contemplating or replicating some of the Access to Justice Program’s initiatives. The year 2016 brought more visitors from near and far. A few of these visits are described below.

The sharing of information heightens awareness of the inequalities that exist in accessing the justice system and has a demonstrated positive impact on other jurisdictions. For example, in March 2015, under the auspices of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Rule of Law and Human Rights Programme (RoLHR), a delegation from the Supreme Court of Nepal, visited the Access to Justice Program. Thereafter, in July 2015, Nepal established an Access to Justice Commission. This Commission seeks to enhance access to justice for women, poor and marginalized groups throughout Nepal. See letter from RoLHR Justice Sector Coordinator Ratna K. Shrestha, attached as Appendix H,” explaining the impact that the delegation’s visit had on Nepal’s judicial system and requesting a visit in 2016 of a second Nepalese delegation.

The second Nepalese delegation made up of seven members of the Nepalese judiciary came to study with the Access to Justice Program in June 2016. The delegation included members of the Access to Justice Commission and the Supreme and District Courts. The visit consisted of a half-day program that included presentations from Justice Fisher and the Access to Justice Program staff, followed by a tour of Civil Court

Help Center. Discussion included court-based unbundled volunteer lawyer programs, the CourtHelp website, DIY Form document assembly programs, Court Help Centers, the Mobile Legal Help Center, community outreach, and the Housing Court Guardian Ad Litem Program. It is hoped that these exchanges will continue to level the playing field for Nepal's unrepresented communities.

In July, a two-person delegation from the Justice Studies Center of the Americas (JSCA) visited the Access to Justice Program. The JSCA is an autonomous inter-governmental organization whose mission is to strengthen the justice systems and administration of justice in Latin American countries. The JSCA is based in Santiago, Chile. After Judge Fisher and the Access to Justice Program made presentations on various programs, a group discussion revealed that one of the biggest impediments to access to justice in Latin American countries is the fact that in most countries a litigant is required to have a lawyer to go to court, heightening the need for alternative dispute resolution mechanisms.

In September, Judges and representatives from the Maryland Administrative Office of the Courts visited the Access to Justice Program to share ideas and discuss programs and resources that assist unrepresented litigants in landlord-tenant matters. The delegation toured the Kings County Housing Court in the morning and observed the Volunteer Lawyer for the Day and Court Navigator Housing Programs in action. The group was also able to observe the Court Help Center, the Volunteer Lawyers Program, and the Housing Court Answers and University Settlement Court Navigator Programs. In the afternoon, the visitors joined Justice Fern A. Fisher for lunch, followed by presentations on the DIY Form programs, the Guardian Ad Litem Program and the Assigned Counsel Program. The Maryland visitors included District Court Chief Judge John P. Morrissey, District Court Judge Mark F. Scurti, Access to Justice Program Department Director Pam Ortiz, Esq., Court Services Center Manager Lonni Summers, Esq., and Government Relations Representative Andrew F. Tress.

"I cannot thank you enough for hosting our visit yesterday, and for your wonderful hospitality. Your staff did a fantastic job sharing New York's exemplary programs. We were quite impressed...We will be following through to further develop our ideas armed with the insights and information we gleaned from our visit."

*Email, Maryland Access to Justice
Department Director, September
2016*

Locally, the Access to Justice Program conducted a private training in March on the best practices of Court Help Centers for the NYC Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH). The training highlighted how Help Centers work, showcased the online database intake form, and explained how cross trainings between courts increases everyone's knowledge base while promoting unity.

TRAIN THE TRAINER PROGRAMS

“Train the trainer” programs are utilized to save costs and reach a greater number of people. The Community Leaders Roundtables and Public Librarians’ Programs are examples of train the trainer programs. They are conducted with the idea of disseminating information to the people and places that people turn to when they need assistance. Once trained, these people can effectively pass knowledge and skills to their patrons. The train the trainer method is also used at times for personnel training by bringing in upper level Court Clerks with the expectation that they will train their staff. In 2016, live presentations were made on the DIY Form programs at the Family Court Chief Clerk’s annual meeting and at a Civil Court upper level Clerks meeting. (See Appendix B.) The Access to Justice Program believes that the time dedicated to educational programs is invaluable and works to enhance access justice.

PUBLICATIONS

The Access to Justice Program publishes various resources aimed at promoting improved access to justice within the New York State court system. The publications are written with the goal that the principles and best practices suggested for New York can be replicated elsewhere. Publications are linked on the Access to Justice Program’s website at <http://www.nycourts.gov/ip/nya2j/publications.shtml>. The Access to Justice Program also authors a number of topical guidebooks to help unrepresented litigants navigate the court system. Some of these guidebooks are distributed in Help Centers. The Access to Justice Program is able to reach an even greater number of litigants by posting the guidebooks online. Litigants primarily find these guidebooks linked from topical sections on the CourtHelp website or other nycourts.gov pages. For example, the “Tenant Questions & Answers: Nonpayment Eviction Cases in New York State” guidebook was downloaded 51,272 times in 2016. A full list of guides can be found under Guidebook at <http://nycourts.gov/CourtHelp/AtoZ.shtml#G>.

In 2016, the Access to Justice Program published or updated the following publications:

- **New York City Tenants: Questions & Answers About Housing Court:** Access to Justice Program Chief Counsel Rochelle Klempner, Esq. and volunteer retired attorney Ernesto Belzaguy updated this legal and procedural information guide, which provides simple plain language answers to commonly asked tenant questions. The information covers: holdovers, nonpayments, illegal lock-outs, HP actions, harassment cases, service, settlements, orders to show cause, evictions and more. A section in the back contains links and phone numbers to find help. Updates included adding information about ADA services, the Guardian Ad Litem Program, and the Assigned Counsel Program, as well as edits in light of changes in the harassment laws. The Guide provides an excellent overview for tenants with cases in the Housing Courts: <http://nycourts.gov/courts/nyc/housing/pdfs/tenantsguide.pdf>.
- **White Paper: Creating a Successful Court-Based Program to Safeguard Access to Justice for Mentally and Physically Impaired Litigants at Risk for**

Eviction: Denise Colon-Greenaway, Esq., MSW, wrote this white paper which discusses what happens when there is no landlord-tenant GAL program in place to safeguard the rights of impaired litigants facing eviction, the NYC Civil Court’s Housing Part Guardian Ad Litem Program, how this program serves as a model court-based program, and suggestions for how judicial systems throughout the nation can seek to replicate the program. The white paper is available at http://www.nycourts.gov/ip/nya2j/pdfs/CourtBasedProgram_Impaired.pdf.

- **Creating a User-Friendly Court Structure and Environment:** As part of the Self-Represented Litigation Network’s Administrative Office of the Courts Working Group, Access to Justice Program Chief Counsel Rochelle Klempner, Esq., Pamela Cardullo Ortiz (Maryland Court System), Stacey Marz (Alaskan Court System), and Bonnie Hough (California Court System) worked with Renee L Danser, Esq., NACM Guide Workgroup Chair and District Court Administrator in Pennsylvania, to contribute the text for sections about self-represented litigants in this 2016 Guide published by the National Association of Court Management (NACM). In particular, subject matter included maintaining neutrality, distinguishing legal information from legal advice, court services, cultural competency, staff training, as well as helpful resources. The Guide is available at https://nacmnet.org/sites/default/files/publications/Guides/User-Friendly_Court_Guide_2016.pdf.
- **Opening Courthouse Doors: Librarians’ Portfolios:** Linda Dunlap-Miller, Special Assistant to Access to Justice Programs Outside New York City, updated the Access to Justice Program’s Librarian Portfolios originally created in 2010 for the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th Judicial Districts, and Nassau and Suffolk Counties. The Portfolios were created to describe resources in the New York State courts to be used at trainings for public librarians. Each publication is tailored to each area. The goal of these Portfolios is to introduce and inform public librarians about access to justice resources, so they can share them with their library patrons. Portfolios include Guide to Court System Resources, Reference Guide For Common Questions, Criminal and Civil Court Structure, Jury Duty Information, Careers In The Court System, Opportunities For Student Involvement, CourtHelp Website, DIY (Do-It-Yourself) Forms, Library Resources Available To The Public, Local Court Information, and numerous online resources for each judicial district or county. The Portfolios are available at <http://www.nycourts.gov/ip/nya2j/publications.shtml>.

PART VIII: RECOGNITION

The Access to Justice Program could not assist thousands of unrepresented litigants each year without the commitment of hundreds of volunteers. The law firms, solo-practitioners, corporations, government attorneys, non-profit organizations, law schools, non-attorneys, and court personnel who give so much of their time and energy are essential for providing assistance and improving access to the courts for litigants who do not have counsel.

It is important to spotlight the difference these organizations, individuals and court employees make in peoples' lives. Therefore, every year, the Access to Justice Program acknowledges the volunteers who are integral to the success of the court-based programs and who go above and beyond and extend themselves on behalf of others. Their pro bono service is trumpeted during National Pro Bono Week with deep appreciation for their contribution. Volunteers are also featured on the Access to Justice Program's Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/NYCourtsVLP>) and Twitter feed (<http://twitter.com/NYCourtsA2J>). Individual court employees and Court staffs are recognized for their contributions to the DIY Form programs at Star Award ceremonies held throughout the year. Milestones reached in volunteer programs are celebrated. Statewide contributions by judicial and non-judicial staff furthering access to justice are highlighted and acknowledged in this Report (see Appendix F).

Set forth below are the contributions recognized in 2016. In addition, the names of the Access to Justice Program's Partners, Friends and Volunteers are recognized at the back of this Report.

NATIONAL PRO BONO CELEBRATION WEEK VOLUNTEER AWARDS

Pro Bono Celebration Week is a national event that takes place every year in late October with events all over the country acknowledging the extraordinary contributions of volunteer attorneys. During the eighth annual Pro Bono Celebration Week, the Access to Justice Program, the New York State Bar Association (NYSBA), and the New York County Lawyers' Association (NYCLA) co-sponsored a pro bono volunteer recognition event on October 27, 2016 at the NYC Civil Court. NYCLA President Carol A. Sigmond, NYSBA President-elect Sharon Stern Gerstman and Acting New York County Supreme Court Justice Edwina Richardson-Mendelson spoke and presented awards. Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for NYC Courts and Director, NYS Courts Access to Justice Program Justice Fern A. Fisher provided her well wishes via recorded video message.



All of the NYS Courts Access to Justice Program honorees performed over 50-hours of pro bono service in a court-based program throughout 2016. Special recognition was given to a number of exceptional attorneys and non-attorneys for their dedication and

commitment. Access to Justice Program plaque recipients included William Brick, Esq., who received a Superstar Award for his three years of dedicated service in the Consumer Debt Volunteer Lawyer for the Day Program; William Richards, Esq., for service in the Consumer Debt Volunteer Lawyer for the Day Program; Stella Hirsch, Esq., for service in both the Consumer Debt Volunteer Lawyer for the Day Program and Consumer Volunteer Lawyer Program; Maria La Macchia, Esq., and Mahbubar Talukdar, Esq., for service in the Uncontested Divorce Program; Barbara R. Mendelson, Esq. and Mary C. Pennisi, Esq., for service in the Family Court Volunteer Attorney Program; VeNita LaNier for service in the Consumer Court Navigator Program; Yscary Rodriguez for service in the Housing Court Navigator Program; Crystal A. Jackson, Esq., and Rina F. Lieberman, Esq., for service in the Housing Volunteer Lawyer for the Day Program; Ann Elizabeth Lewis, Esq., and Vania Ming Tseng, Esq., for service in the Housing Volunteer Lawyer Program; and Thomas Jeffrey Giles and Stuart C. Adler, Esq., for service in the Guardian Ad Litem Program. A complete list of all the volunteers who were recognized for their outstanding pro bono service is listed in the back of this Report and online at http://www.nycourts.gov/ip/nya2j/pdfs/ProBonoAwards_2016.pdf. A photo gallery from the event is posted on the NYS Courts Access to Justice Program Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/NYCourtsVLP>.

RECEPTION IN HONOR OF TEN YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF FAMILY COURT VOLUNTEER ATTORNEY PROGRAM

On November 17, 2016, the Access to Justice Program and the NYC Family Court celebrated the ten year anniversary of the Volunteer Attorney Program. A lovely reception was held at the offices of Proskauer Rose LLP to mark this milestone and recognize the many attorneys who generously volunteer their time and provide legal advice to unrepresented litigants in the Family Courts. NYS Courts Access to Justice Program Director Hon. Fern A. Fisher, Administrative Judge of the NYC Family Court Jeanette Ruiz and Proskauer Rose LLP partner William Silverman, Esq. all spoke of the great need that this pro bono program fills. Participating law firms and practitioners were acknowledged and listed in the Reception Program available at http://www.nycourts.gov/ip/nya2j/pdfs/ProBono_Agenda16.pdf. In addition, Judge Ruiz presented Mr. Silverman and six attorneys -- Greenberg Traurig LLP attorneys John Elliott and Philip Cohen; Citigroup attorneys Katherine Kessler, Joellen Valentine and Sara Blotner; and Kroub, Silbersher Kolmykov partner Gaston Kroub -- with plaques for their dedication to the program since its inception. Photos from the event are posted on Access to Justice Volunteer Program's Facebook page: www.facebook.com/NYCourtsVLP.

DIY FORM PROGRAM STAR AWARDS

From time to time, the Access to Justice Program recognizes court system personnel and courts that have made exceptional contributions to the successful development and implementation of the DIY Form programs. The DIY Star Award applauds the individuals or courts whose actions are critical in creating lasting change in court culture and work environment. The DIY Star Award also boosts employee morale and fosters court competition which improves the success of the DIY Form programs. Quarterly statistical information, litigant User Surveys, and nominations by fellow employees are reviewed to choose the winners. DIY Star winners earn large touchscreen monitors and computers for their courthouses to use as public access terminals. The computers are customized for ready access to the DIY Form programs. The touchscreen monitors enhance the user experience. Only DIY Star Award winning courts have these monitors.



In 2016, DIY Star Award ceremonies were held in June, September and November. Each celebration is summarized below and more information about the DIY Star Award recipients is located at <http://www.nycourts.gov/ip/nya2j/diyawards.shtml>.

LYNNE DAY CORTLAND COUNTY SURROGATE'S COURT

Cortland County Surrogate's Court Chief Clerk Lynne Day received the DIY Star Award because of her long-standing promotion of the DIY Form programs and the personal touch she provides when assisting unrepresented litigants in her court. NYS Courts Access to Justice Program Director/Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for NYC Courts Justice Fern A. Fisher, Sixth Judicial District Administrative Judge Molly R. Fitzgerald, District Executive Gregory A. Gates, Cortland County Supreme Court Judge Phillip Rumsey, Cortland County Surrogate's Court Judge Julie A. Campbell, and Access to Justice Program Chief Counsel Rochelle Klempner all spoke about Lynne's contribution to promoting the use of the Surrogate's Court DIY Form programs and her efforts to increase access to justice for unrepresented litigants. Lynne consistently returns DIY User Surveys from the Cortland County Surrogate's Court which shows that the court refers a high volume of litigants to the program. Many DIY users complete the forms at one of the two public access computer terminals set up by Lynne in the Cortland County Surrogate's Court Clerk's office. When Lynne accepted the DIY Star Award she expressed her appreciation and stated that "the knowledge gained from the DIY program assists the user in filing a properly completed petition which leaves them with a positive experience both with our office and the court system in general."

LAURA HANKIN COLUMBIA COUNTY SUPREME COURT LAW LIBRARY

Columbia County Supreme Court Law Librarian Laura Hankin received the DIY Star Award after being nominated by Columbia County Surrogate's Court Chief Clerk Teresa

Slemp. The nomination received explained Laura's ability to patiently work with unrepresented litigants and anticipate their needs. Laura is the first librarian to win the Star Award. She is a frequent attendee at all Access to Justice Program's DIY Forms and Help Center webinars, has participated in DIY developer's groups, has contributed to the DIY staff testimonials page, assisted in public library outreach, has helped to incorporate the Access to Justice Program's resources into the annual Law Librarian Association meetings and greatly assisted in the establishment of the Columbia County Help Center. Administrative Judge for the Third Judicial District Thomas A. Breslin; Hon. Jonathan Nichols; Surrogate's Court Chief Clerk Teresa Slemp; and Access to Justice Program Special Counsel Lisa Zayas, all spoke about the countless contributions that Laura has made assisting unrepresented litigants at the Columbia County Supreme Courthouse. Hon. Thomas A. Breslin read a letter on behalf of Principal Law Librarian Laura Barber. Law Clerk Jan Perlin read a letter on behalf of Hon. Richard Mott. Access to Justice Program staff and many of Laura's fellow librarians from around the state watched the ceremony via Skype. Laura's patience and passion have truly furthered equal access to justice for unrepresented litigants in Columbia County and throughout New York State.

MONICA DINGLE AND THE SPECIAL TERM NAME CHANGE STAFF QUEENS COUNTY CIVIL COURT

Queens County Civil Court Assistant Deputy Chief Clerk Monica Dingle and the Special Term Name Change Staff were awarded DIY Star Awards for their outstanding promotion of the Adult and Child Name Change DIY Form programs. Between 2015 and 2016 usage of the DIY Form programs to prepare name change petitions filed in Queens County Civil Court jumped from 40% to nearly 90% of all filings. Monica Dingle was singled out for the award because of her excellent leadership skills and demonstrated commitment to the DIY Form programs. Monica changed the protocol in the Special Term Clerk's Office to utilize the DIY Form Name Change public access terminals in place of paper forms. This improved access to justice for litigants and court operations, making the preparation of documents quicker and more efficient. Previously, Monica employed a triage system and express lanes that vastly improved customer service and usage of the Consumer Debt Vacate Default Judgment DIY Form program. Monica has also assisted the Access to Justice Program with presentations to court employees on DIY efficiency. Access to Justice Program Director/Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for NYC Courts Hon. Fern A. Fisher; Administrative Judge of the Queens Supreme Court Jeremy Weinstein, Access to Justice Program Chief Counsel Rochelle Klempner, Supervising Judge of the Queens County Civil Court Joseph Esposito and NYC Civil Court Chief Clerk, Carol Alt all spoke about Monica's and the Special Term Name Change Staff's hard work and effort in promoting equal access to justice for all individuals.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE EFFORTS IN THE COURTS THROUGHOUT NEW YORK STATE

In addition to the Access to Justice Program's measures taken to provide equal access to justice, many other judicial and non-judicial personnel throughout the New York State Court system act to assist unrepresented litigants and improve access to justice. These accomplishments should not go unrecognized. Attached as Appendix F is a compilation of these efforts, as contributed by the various Judicial Districts and New York City Courts. This sampling of the programs, services, presentations, community events and fairs held in 2016 could not have happened without the care and commitment of so many hard working court employees and their partners who strive to provide equal access to justice.

APPENDIX A: PUBLIC TRAININGS AND PRESENTATIONS

January

Social Justice and the Power and Limitations of the Bench

Justice Fern A. Fisher presented on a panel hosted by the Impact Center for Public Interest Law at New York Law School to students, attorneys and other advocates for social justice.

Attendees received 1.5 CLE credits.

Collaborating with your Courts on E-filing, Document Assembly and Access for Low Income People

Rochelle Klempner, Esq., presented on a panel at the Legal Services Corp.'s 2016 TIG conference in San Antonio, Texas, discussing the importance of collaborations between legal services and the court system.

Wormhole to the Future

Rochelle Klempner, Esq., presented on a panel at the Legal Services Corp.'s 2016 TIG conference in San Antonio, Texas, discussing what technologies of the near future will become important. Ms. Klempner presented on possible changes to the way litigants access the court system and changes within courthouses. This presentation can be viewed at

<http://www.lsc.gov/media-center/galleries-multimedia/video/tig-2016-wormhole-future>.

Representing Individuals with Disabilities and the Improving Litigation Experience for Lawyers and Litigants with Disabilities.

Denise Colon-Greenaway, Esq., MSW, presented at the New York City Bar Association Disability Law Committee's Access to Justice Program's 2-hour live CLE program held at the NYC Bar Association in New York County. The Coordinator of the GAL Program, along with three other expert panelists, discussed the numerous legal and practical challenges that arise in making the courts accessible to individuals with disabilities. Ms. Colon-Greenaway specifically addressed how NYC Housing Court makes accommodations for the mentally and physically impaired facing eviction proceedings.

Lay GAL Training

Free specialized training was provided for two court appointed GAL family members of a physically or mentally impaired litigant in the New York County Civil Court. This training is an abbreviated version of the training provided to those seeking to be on the Housing Part GAL list. Lay GAL training is provided when the Judge seeks to appoint a family member. The lay GAL training prepares family members to assume the role of GAL with knowledge of what this role entails, the expectations from the court, and available resources for help. Family members view a 5.5-hour video replay of the most recent live GAL training.

Combined VLFD Consumer Debt and VLP Consumer Debt Training

A video replay training was conducted for one attorney at the New York County Civil Court. The 4.5 hour training provided an overview of Consumer Debt Law, including ethics and instruction on Courtroom Skills and Settlement Negotiation. Attorneys must provide at least 20 hours of pro bono in the courtroom in the court-based unbundled consumer debt program.

Uncontested Divorce Training

A 1.5-hour live CLE training was conducted for six attorneys at the New York County Civil Court. Volunteers were trained in the law of uncontested divorce, how to communicate with litigants and how to use the Drafting Libraries computer software program to prepare uncontested divorce papers for litigants needing assistance. In exchange for CLE credits awarded for the training, attorneys provide 20 hours of pro bono assistance to unrepresented litigants in the Uncontested Divorce Program.

VAP Family Court Training

A live training was conducted for 74 attorneys at the offices of Kramer Levin Naftalis & Frankel LLP. The 2-hour CLE training provided an overview of the basics of paternity and child support law with topics including: "Introduction to Family Court," "Introduction to Family Court Paternity" and "Introduction to Family Court Child Support." In exchange for CLE credits awarded for the training, attorneys provide pro bono assistance in the Family Court Help Centers.

Combined Housing and Consumer Debt Court Navigator Program Training

A training session was given for 5 college students and other approved volunteers at the Bronx County Civil Court in exchange for 30 hours of volunteer service in a Resolution Part of the Housing Court or in the Bronx County Civil Court Consumer Debt Part. The 2.5-hour session provided an overview of the Civil Court's Housing and Consumer Debt Parts with a video replay of role play scenarios and information about the Court's processes and procedures.

Keynote Speaker at Justice for All Luncheon

Justice Fern A. Fisher spoke at the NYS Bar Association's 10th Anniversary - Justice for All luncheon in New York County about access to justice.

February

Court Navigator Program Training (Housing)

A training session was given for a total of 28 college students and other approved volunteers at the New York County Civil Court in exchange for 30 hours of volunteer service in a Resolution Part of the Housing Court. The 2.5-hour session, which included both a video replay of role play scenarios with commentary and a training on the *One Shot Deal* as well as a live segment, provided an overview of the Housing Court with a focus on issues arising out of nonpayment proceedings.

Combined VLFD Housing and VLP Housing Training

An 8.5 hour CLE credit two-day video replay training was offered at the New York County Civil Court to 11 attorneys for the VLFD segment and for the VLP portion of the training. The training included a CLE on Ethics for Volunteer Attorneys (.5 CLE credit), Nonpayment Proceedings (2 CLE credits), and Negotiating and Drafting Stipulations of Settlement (1 CLE credit) for the VLFD portion of the training, and an Introduction to the Help Center (1 CLE credit), Holdover Proceedings (3 CLE credits), and HP Proceedings and Harassment Law (1 CLE credit) for the VLP. VLFD Program training attendees committed to volunteer two days within three months in exchange for this training, and VLP Program participants pledged to give free legal advice for 12 hours in one of the Housing Court Help Centers within three months of the training.

Lay GAL Training (see January)

Four court-appointed GAL family members were trained.

Combined VLFD Consumer Debt and VLP Consumer Debt Training (see January)

A video replay training was conducted for six attorneys at the New York County Civil Court.

Uncontested Divorce Training

A 1.5-hour live CLE training was conducted for eleven attorneys at the New York County Civil Court. (see January)

CLARO Recognition Program

Justice Fern A. Fisher presented at the Fordham University School of Law Feerick Center's recognition program for Manhattan CLARO volunteer lawyers.

VAP Family Court Training

A live training was conducted for 28 attorneys at the offices of Proskauer Rose LLP. The 2.0-hour CLE training provided an overview of the basics of child custody, visitation and family

offense law. In exchange for CLE credits awarded for the training, attorneys provide pro bono assistance in the Family Court Help Centers.

VAP Family Court Training

A live training was conducted for 12 attorneys at the offices of Proskauer Rose LLP. The 2.5-hour CLE training provided an overview of the basics of paternity and child support law with topics including: "Introduction to Family Court," "Introduction to Family Court Paternity" and "Introduction to Family Court Child Support." In exchange for CLE credits awarded for the training, attorneys provide pro bono assistance in the Family Court Help Centers.

Combined VLFD Consumer Debt and VLP Consumer Debt Training

A video replay training was conducted for one law student at the New York County Civil Court. The 4.5 hour training provided an overview of Consumer Debt Law, including ethics and instruction on Courtroom Skills and Settlement Negotiation. Law Students must provide at least 50 hours of pro bono in the courtroom in the court-based unbundled consumer debt program.

Combined VLFD Consumer Debt and VLP Consumer Debt Training (see above)

A video replay training was conducted for four law students at Columbia law school.

Self-Help Services and Courtroom Innovations Working Group

Justice Fisher chairs and convenes the Self-Represented Litigation Network's working group to explore justice system innovation. The committee is made up of representatives from 50 states. This first conference call meeting included introductions and an explanation of self-help services.

March

Best Practices of Court Help Centers Training for the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings

The Access to Justice Program held a private training on the best practices of help centers for two Assistant Commissioners, John Castelli and Maria Marchiano, and the First Deputy Commissioner, Supervising Administrative Law Judge, John W. Burns, of the NYC Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings. A PowerPoint presentation explained how the Help Centers operate, handle intake, internal trainings and cross trainings between disciplines and how Help Centers increase court efficiency. Following the presentation, a tour was given of the Kings County Civil Court Help Center.

Lay GAL Training (see January)

One court-appointed GAL family member was trained.

Combined VLFD Consumer Debt and VLP Consumer Debt Training (see February)

A video replay training was conducted for five law students at Columbia law school.

VAP Family Court Training

A live training was conducted for 39 attorneys at the offices of Kramer Levin Naftalis & Frankel LLP. The 2.0-CLE training provided an overview of the basics of child custody, visitation and family offense law. In exchange for CLE credits awarded for the training, attorneys provide pro bono assistance in the Family Court Help Centers.

Uncontested Divorce Training

An Uncontested Divorce Program live training was conducted at Columbia Law School for five law students. The 1.5-hour training provided an overview of uncontested divorce law and a demonstration of the Drafting Libraries Uncontested Divorce software program. In exchange for the training, students perform 50 hours of pro bono assistance in the Uncontested Divorce Program.

Uncontested Divorce Training (see above)

An Uncontested Divorce Program video replay training was conducted at Columbia Law School for one law student.

Combined VLFD Consumer Debt and VLP Consumer Debt Training (see February)

A video replay training was conducted for three law students at Columbia law school.

Bridge the Gap Training

A comprehensive live basic training for the VLP and VLFD Housing and Consumer Debt Programs and the Uncontested Divorce Program was offered at the New York County Civil Court over three days. In return for CLE training, participants were required to complete a 50-hour supervised pro bono practicum assisting litigants in New York City Housing, Civil and Supreme Courts, within six months of training, assisting litigants with housing, consumer debt law and uncontested divorce in the Access to Justice Program's unbundled court-based legal services programs. About 40 students, recent law graduates and attorneys were trained. This training fulfills the first or second year mandatory CLE requirements for recent law graduates and newly admitted attorneys.

Self-Help Services and Courtroom Innovations Working Group (see February)

This conference call meeting discussed remote services for unrepresented litigants.

April

Lay GAL Training (see January)

Three court-appointed GAL family members were trained.

Combined VLFD Consumer Debt and VLP Consumer Debt Training (see February)

A video replay training was conducted for two law students at the New York County Civil Court.

Uncontested Divorce Training (see January)

A 1.5-hour video replay training was conducted for three attorneys at the New York County Civil Court.

VAP Family Court Training

A live training was conducted for 29 attorneys at the New York County Civil Court. The 2.5-hour CLE training provided an overview of the basics of paternity and child support law with topics including: "Introduction to Family Court," "Introduction to Family Court Paternity" and "Introduction to Family Court Child Support." In exchange for CLE credits awarded for the training, attorneys provide pro bono assistance in the Family Court Help Centers.

VAP Family Court Training

A live training was conducted for 29 attorneys at the New York County Civil Court. The 2.0-hour CLE training provided an overview of child custody, visitation and family offense. In exchange for CLE credits awarded for the training, attorneys provide pro bono assistance in the Family Court Help Centers.

The Changing Nature of the Profession and Access to Justice

Justice Fern A. Fisher participated in the New York Law School's Impact Center for Public Interest Law symposium: Equal Before the Law: Civil Rights and Access to Justice. The panel discussed the important issues facing the legal profession, the judicial system and the country. Attendees received 1.5 CLE credits.

Attorney for the Day Foreclosure Program

Justice Fern A. Fisher presented at the 9th Judicial District Pro Bono Committee's ceremony for the Attorney for the Day Foreclosure Program.

Self-Help Services and Courtroom Innovations Working Group (see February)

This conference call meeting discussed unbundled legal services.

May

Combined Housing and Consumer Debt Court Navigator Program Training (see January)

Twelve college students and other approved volunteers were trained at the Bronx County Civil Court.

Court Initiatives to Increase Personal Assistance

Tracy McNeil, Esq. and Suffolk County Family Court Chief Clerk Mike Williams presented on a panel at the NYSBA Task Force on Family Court Strategies for Increasing Assistance for the Unrepresented in Family Court conference in Albany. Their presentation covered Help Centers and court efficiency, triage, the Family Offense Petition document assembly program and the DIY Form programs.

Race, Poverty, Identity: Diversity Issues and Access to Civil Justice

Justice Fern Fisher presented on a panel at the Permanent Commission on Access to Justice Fifth Annual Law School Access to Justice Conference: The Role of New York's Law Schools in Helping Meet the Essential Civil Legal Needs of Low-Income New Yorkers. The panel discussion explored how New York's law schools can and should contribute to improved access to equal justice for New Yorkers who face barriers due to race, poverty, identity and their intersections.

Lay GAL Training (see January)

Three court-appointed GAL family members were trained.

Building Bridges

Justice Fern Fisher participated in a panel discussion at the Building Bridges (Creando Puentes) conference held at Moravian College in Bethlehem, PA. The conference's goal was to bring people together and raise awareness to end gender-based harassment and violence in the Dominican Republic and in the Lehigh Valley in Pennsylvania.

Judicial Education and Engagement Table Topic and Workshop

At the Self-Represented Litigation Network (SRLN) Equal Justice Conference pre-conference in Chicago, IL, Justice Fern Fisher, co-led a table topic on judicial education and engagement. The table discussed the problems and possible solutions to communicating, educating and inspiring judges. The table prepared and presented a PowerPoint presentation available at https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1wbLd_sb1wLxdg0MTyL86VlxnkLRnSMOWCwWTIRL6pYQ/pub?start=false&loop=false&delayms=15000#slide=id.p13.

E-filing and Document Assembly Table Topic and Workshop

At the Self-Represented Litigation Network (SRLN) Equal Justice Conference pre-conference in Chicago, IL, Rochelle Klempner, Esq., co-led a table topic on e-filing and document assembly. The discussion topics included the pro and cons of vendor and home-grown case management systems and the steps to building an integrated program. The table prepared and presented a PowerPoint presentation available at <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1bzRmqVE2UJLiRygSBAdu0RI2-i13Eb5RONLbYijkF-8/pub?start=false&loop=false&delayms=15000#slide=id.p29>.

Combined Housing and Consumer Debt Court Navigator Program Training (see January)

A training session was held for 12 college students and paralegals at the Bronx County Civil Court.

Combined VLFD Consumer Debt and VLP Consumer Debt Training (see February)

A video replay training was conducted for nine law students at the New York County Civil Court.

Uncontested Divorce Training (See March)

An Uncontested Divorce Program live training was conducted at the New York City Civil Court for eight law students.

Combined VLFD Consumer Debt and VLP Consumer Debt Training (see January)

A video replay training was conducted for eight law students at the New York Legal assistance Group.

Housing Court Answers Annual Conference

Justice Fern A. Fisher spoke at the Housing Court Answers annual conference held at the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law in New York County. Justice Fisher talked about access to justice issues in the NYC Housing Court.

Self-Help Services and Courtroom Innovations Working Group (see February)

This conference call meeting discussed using remote technologies to deliver legal services to unrepresented litigants.

June

VLFD Housing Training (see February)

A 3.5 CLE credit video replay training was offered at the law offices of Kirkland & Ellis LLP to 13 law students, recent law graduates and attorneys. VLFD Program training attendees committed to volunteer two days within 12 months in exchange for this training.

Assigned Counsel Project (ACP) Internship Program Training

This comprehensive three-day training was held at three different locations with the collaboration of the Access to Justice Program's Housing Court Initiatives, Help Centers, and Court-Based Interdisciplinary Programs. Two law students participated in this program's multi-day training, which included an 8.5 hour CLE credit training on: Ethics for Volunteer Attorneys (.5 CLE credit), Nonpayment Proceedings (2 CLE credits), and Negotiating and Drafting Stipulations of Settlement (1 CLE credit) at the law offices of Kirkland & Ellis LLP (see above); a video replay of: an Introduction to the Help Center (1 CLE credit), Holdover Proceedings (3 CLE credits), and HP Proceedings and Harassment Law (1 CLE credit) at the NY County Civil Court. In addition to this basic training, the volunteers learned about the DIY Form Programs, and the Basics of the Family Eviction Prevention Supplement (FEPS) (1 CLE credit) through a video replay, and attended live trainings on Introduction to the ACP & Senior Citizens Resources at the NY County Civil Court, and How to Conduct Intake in ACP Cases at the Kings County Housing Court. The volunteers were also given an opportunity to observe courtroom proceedings in the Kings County Housing Court VLFD Part. The training was offered in exchange for 50 hours of volunteer service conducting intake for the Program and assessing the legal and social services needs of vulnerable seniors at risk of eviction in Kings and Queens Counties.

Court Navigator Program Training (Housing) (see February)

Two separate training sessions were offered in June at the New York County Civil Court. Twenty-four college students and other approved volunteers (including two law students) attended the first session and 29 attendees joined the second one.

DIY Form Program Training for Housing Court Navigators

Two separate live training sessions were held at the New York County Civil Court. Fourteen volunteers, including 12 Court Navigators and two law students attended the first training, and 12 Court Navigators joined the second training about the DIY Form programs to help unrepresented litigants prepare personalized court forms that are ready to serve and file. The 2.0 hour trainings highlighted the Tenant Affidavit to Vacate a Default Judgment, Tenant Affidavit to Restore Case to the Calendar, and Roommate Holdover programs, and provided an overview of other available programs.

GAL General Training

The GAL Program offered free live training to prospective GALs in the New York County Civil Court. The GAL Program training consists of 7.5 hours and includes the following segments: "Introduction to Housing Court/What is a GAL," "Housing Court Nonpayment and Holdover Proceedings," "Adult Protective Services and GAL Work," "Practical Negotiation Tips for GALs,"

“Short Guide to Emergency Assistance in New York,” “Overview of Mental Illness and Engagement Strategies,” and “GAL Practical Issues.” Attorneys were provided with free CLE credits (including 1 Ethics credit) upon completion of the training. All new GALs are expected to accept three pro-bono appointments over the course of the first year following training. Although many applied, 15 people successfully interviewed, completed background and reference checks, attended the training and were added to the GAL list.

Supplemental GAL Workshop on Avoiding Advocate Burnout: Working With Clients in Crisis

A 1.5-hour live CLE workshop entitled “Avoiding Advocate Burnout: Working With Clients in Crisis” was held at the New York County Civil Court for 15 GALs participating in the Housing Court GAL Program. Leah Goodridge, Supervising Attorney at MFY Legal Services, provided tips on effective skills for managing stressful cases in a manner that preserves one’s sense of balance and control. Topics discussed included: (1) re-envisioning priorities and roles; (2) communication; (3) time management; and (4) cultural competency.

Nepal Delegation Visit

A seven person delegation from Nepal made up of Judges and staff from the Supreme and District Courts as well as members of Nepal’s new Access to Justice Commission visited to learn about access to justice programs and initiatives. This is the second delegation to visit from Nepal; the last group came in 2015. Presentations were made by Justice Fern Fisher and members of the Access to Justice Program staff on various topics, including, court-based unbundled volunteer lawyer programs, the CourtHelp website, DIY Form document assembly programs, Court Help Centers, the Mobile Legal Help Center and community outreach, and the Housing Court Guardian Ad Litem program. The presentation concluded with a tour of the New York County Civil Court Help Center.

Meeting Client Needs with User-Friendly Online Tools

At the 2016 Statewide Civil Legal Aid Technology Conference held at New York Law School, Rochelle Klempner, Esq., presented a PowerPoint explaining the importance of UX – User Experience – design in online resources for unrepresented litigants. Ms. Klempner used several examples of testing surprises from the access to justice community to illustrate the point. The video is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZHaNRlpZH2c>

Document Assembly

At the 2016 Statewide Civil Legal Aid Technology Conference Rochelle Klempner, Esq., facilitated two small group break-out session conversations during the technology strategizing workshop on the benefits of document assembly for Legal Services program directors and senior management.

The Legal Profession and the Call to Close the Access to Legal Services and Access to Justice Gaps

Justice Fern A. Fisher participated in a panel discussion at the American Bar Association’s 32nd National Forum on Client Protection in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This session focused on the access to legal services and justice crises currently facing the public and the legal profession’s response. The panel provided information about the ABA Commission on the Future of Legal Services, as well as how the access to legal services and justice problems presents themselves in the federal and state jurisdictional contexts. Justice Fisher discussed current efforts to close these access gaps.

Combined VLF D Consumer Debt and VLP Consumer Debt Training (see January)

A video replay training was conducted for one attorney at the New York County Civil Court.

Combined VLF D Consumer Debt and VLP Consumer Debt Training (see February)

A video replay training was conducted for two law students at the New York County Civil Court.

Uncontested Divorce Training (see March)

An Uncontested Divorce Program video replay training was conducted at the New York City Civil Court for two law students.

Foreclosure Training

A live 3-hour training on foreclosure law took place at the Westchester County Court for forty attorneys who will be volunteering in the Westchester Court's newly launched Foreclosure Volunteer Lawyer for the Day Program. The training was conducted by the Court in co-sponsorship with Legal Services of the Hudson Valley.

Combined VLFD Consumer Debt and VLP Consumer Debt Training (see February)

A video replay training was conducted for one law student at the New York County Civil Court.

Self-Help Services and Courtroom Innovations Working Group (see February)

This conference call meeting discussed websites and integrated online materials.

July

Assigned Counsel Project (ACP) Internship Program Training (see June)

One law student and one recent law graduate were trained at the New York County Civil Court and at the Kings County Housing Court.

Combined VLFD Housing and VLP Housing Training (see February)

A video replay training was conducted for 15 volunteers (including two law students) at the New York County Civil Court.

Supplemental Training on Legal Issues Arising out of Rent Stabilization

This 3 hour CLE credit video replay training was provided at the New York County Civil Court to four volunteer lawyers/law graduates (including two law students) who had already completed the basic VLFD/VLP Housing training in exchange for volunteer service. The panelists provided a comprehensive overview of the Rent Stabilization legal framework, explained the relationship between the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) and the New York City Housing Court, and discussed recent doctrinal developments. VLFD Program training attendees committed to volunteer two days within three months in exchange for this training, and VLP Program participants pledged to give free legal advice for eight hours in one of the Housing Court Help Centers within three months of the training.

Supplemental Training on Family Eviction Prevention Supplement (FEPS)

Three volunteers (including two law students) were trained at the New York County Civil Court during this optional supplemental session where they learned about "Basics of the Family Eviction Prevention Supplement (FEPS)" (1 CLE credit) through a video replay. VLFD Program training attendees committed to volunteer one day within three months in exchange for this training, and VLP Program participants pledged to give free legal advice for three hours in one of the Housing Court Help Centers within three months of the training.

Supplemental GAL Workshop on Identifying and Responding to Concerns Regarding Possible Elder Abuse and Financial Exploitation

A 1.5-hour live CLE workshop entitled "Identifying and Responding to Concerns Regarding Possible Elder Abuse and Financial Exploitation" was held at the New York County Civil Court for 32 GALs participating in the Housing Court GAL Program. Deirdre Lok, Assistant Director & General Counsel from the Jeannette Weinberg Center for Elder Abuse Prevention at the Hebrew Home at Riverdale raised awareness and understanding of the elder abuse epidemic and help that GALs can provide in identifying and addressing potential elder abuse within their pool of wards. GALs learned the signs, symptoms and red flags of different types of abuse, whether physical, emotional or financial as well as potential legal remedies and community resources.

Chilean Visit from Justice Studies Center of the Americas

A live 2-hour presentation was made for the Training Coordinator Leonel Gonzalez and the Research and Project Coordinator Marco Fandino of the Justice Studies Center of the Americas by Justice Fern A. Fisher and Access to Justice Program staff. The visitors

explained that many Latin American countries require litigants to be represented in court, making ADR options very important. The meeting included a demonstration of the DIY Form document assembly programs, a discussion on the Court Help Centers, and CourtHelp website, and a presentation on the NYC Housing Court Guardian Ad Litem Program.

Ethics training

A live presentation in addition to a 2-hour video replay of the Ethics training was conducted for twenty-six attorneys at the Westchester County Court who will be volunteering in the Westchester Court's newly launched foreclosure Volunteer Lawyer for the Day Program. The training provided an in depth overview of the ethics of providing limited scope legal services.

VAP Family Court Training

A live training was conducted for 30 attorneys at the offices of Dechert LLP on advanced child support issues. In exchange for CLE credits awarded for the training, attorneys provide pro bono assistance in the Family Court Help Centers.

VAP Family Court Training (see April)

A live training was conducted for 31 attorneys at the offices of Shearman & Sterling LLP.

VAP Family Court Training (see April)

A live training was conducted for 29 attorneys at the New York City Civil Court.

VAP Family Court Training

A live training was conducted for 29 attorneys at the NYC Civil Court. The 2.0-hour CLE training provided an overview of child custody, visitation and family offense. In exchange for CLE credits awarded for the training, attorneys provide pro bono assistance in the Family Court Help Centers.

Supplemental Training on Abatement Hearings 101

This live 3.0-hour CLE credit program, was held at the New York County Civil Court and trained 22 current VLFD/VLP Housing volunteers and two law students on how to litigate an abatement hearing. The training featured a live mock hearing, along with a brief overview of the statutory and case law framework pertaining to abatement hearings. The presenters focused on practice tips in connection with the mechanics of getting exhibits into evidence. In exchange for the training, volunteers committed to represent a VLFD Program client in an abatement hearing in Kings County Housing Court within one year of the training.

Self-Help Services and Courtroom Innovations Working Group (see February)

This conference call meeting discussed judicial perspectives.

August

Combined Housing and Consumer Debt Court Navigator Program Training (see January)

Eight college students and other approved volunteers were trained at the Bronx County Civil Court.

American Bar Association 2016 Annual Meeting

Justice Fern Fisher participated in a panel discussion at the ABA 2016 Town Hall meeting in San Francisco, Ca., about judicial activism to obtain access to justice.

Foreclosure

A video replay of a 3.0-hour training on foreclosure law took place at Pepper Hamilton LLP for four attorneys who will be volunteering in the Westchester Court's newly launched Foreclosure Volunteer Lawyer for the Day Program. The training was conducted by the Court in co-sponsorship with Legal Services of the Hudson Valley.

Combined VLFD Consumer Debt and VLP Consumer Debt Training (see February)

A video replay training was conducted for one law student at the New York County Civil Court.

VAP Family Court Training

A live training was conducted for twenty-five attorneys at the offices of Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP and Affiliates. The 2.0-hour CLE training provided an overview of child custody, visitation and family offense. In exchange for CLE credits awarded for the training, attorneys provide pro bono assistance in the Family Court Help Centers.

Supplemental GAL Workshop on Enhancing Housing Court/GAL Collaboration

A 1.5-hour live workshop was held at the New York County Civil Court for 15 GALs participating in the Housing Court GAL Program. Jean Schneider, Citywide Supervising Judge, NYC Housing Court, engaged in an interactive dialogue with GALs about how to best address challenges they face when advocating for their wards in court and possible court solutions that would greatly facilitate their work.

Combined Housing and Consumer Debt Court Navigator Program Training (see January)

A training session was conducted for 20 college students and paralegals at the Bronx County Civil Court.

Self-Help Services and Courtroom Innovations Working Group (see February)

This conference call meeting discussed limited scope representation.

September

VLFD Housing Training (see June)

A live training was offered at the law offices of Kirkland & Ellis LLP to 44 recent law graduates and attorneys. VLFD Program training attendees committed to volunteer two days within 12 months in exchange for this training.

Combined VLFD Housing and VLP Housing Training (see February)

A video replay training was conducted for 12 volunteers for the VLFD portion, and 13 volunteers for the VLP portion of the training at the New York County Civil Court. CUNY School of Law LaunchPad for Justice Fellows committed to volunteer 50 hours within six months while the other volunteers pledged to serve two days in the VLFD Program or 12 hours in VLP.

Combined VLFD Housing and VLP Housing Training (see February)

A video replay training was conducted for four volunteers for the VLFD portion, and two volunteers for the VLP portion of the training at the New York County Civil Court. CUNY School of Law LaunchPad for Justice Fellows committed to volunteer 50 hours within six months while the other volunteers pledged to serve two days in the VLFD Program or 12 hours with the VLP.

Supplemental Training on Family Eviction Prevention Supplement (FEPS) (see July)

Five CUNY School of Law LaunchPad for Justice Fellows attended this video replay training at the New York County Civil Court.

Supplemental Training on How to Conduct Intake in Housing VLFD Cases

Five CUNY School of Law LaunchPad for Justice Fellows attended this video replay training at the New York County Civil Court. The 1.0-hour CLE credit presentation focused on how to raise defenses and interpose counterclaims, and prepare and file an Answer in a VLFD case.

Combined VLFD Consumer Debt and VLP Consumer Debt Training

A video replay training was conducted for five law graduate fellows at the New York County Civil Court in conjunction with CUNY Law School and the Law Student Initiative Consortium. The 4.5-

hour training will provided an overview of Consumer Debt Law, including ethics and instruction on Courtroom Skills and Settlement Negotiation.

Uncontested Divorce Training

A live 2.0-hour training was conducted for seven law graduate fellows at the New York County Civil Court in conjunction with CUNY Law School and the Law Student Initiative Consortium. The training prepared the fellows to assist unrepresented litigants in the Queens and Brooklyn Supreme Court Uncontested Divorce Program

Ethics Training

A 3.0-hour video replay of the Ethics training was conducted for five law graduate fellows at the New York County Civil Court in conjunction with CUNY Law School and the Law Student Initiative Consortium. The training provided an in depth overview of the ethics of providing limited scope legal services.

Civil Court VLP Training

A 2.0-hour live training was conducted for 10 attorneys at the New York County Civil Court on “Everyday Help Center Litigant Inquiries” to cover Small Claims Court, name changes and other common issues presented by Help Center litigants. In return for training and 2 CLE credits attorneys will provide 20 hours of pro bono assistance to litigants in the Civil Court Help Centers in Brooklyn and Manhattan.

Supplemental GAL Workshop on Basic Trial Preparation

A 1.5-hour live CLE workshop entitled “Basic Trial Preparation for GALs” was held at the New York County Civil Court for 16 GALs participating in the Housing Court GAL Program. Leah Goodridge, Supervising Attorney at MFY Legal Services and Garrett Wright, Supervising Attorney at the Community Development Project, Urban Justice Center co-presented on how GALs should respond when served with motions, discovery requests and told to subpoena certain agencies or people. The workshop allowed for GALs to gain a better understanding of how to prepare and strategize and what they can actually do at trial given their limited legal role.

Maryland State Court Officials Visit

A five-member group of Judges and representatives from the Maryland Administrative Office of the Courts visited the Access to Justice Program to share ideas and discuss programs and resources that increase access to justice in landlord-tenant cases. In the morning, the Access to Justice Program escorted the Maryland delegation to the Kings County Housing Court to observe several resources for unrepresented tenants. In the afternoon, the visitors joined Justice Fern A. Fisher for a luncheon discussion, followed by presentations by Access to Justice Staff on additional housing programs.

Lay GAL Training (see January)

Three court-appointed GAL family members were trained.

Mobile Legal Help Center Presentation

Access to Justice Program Community Outreach Director Joann Low Torres, along with NYLAG MLHC Supervising Attorney Amy Hozer, presented at a 3-hour meeting in Essex County discussing replication of the MLHC in the North Country. Ms. Torres provided detailed information about the design, purchase, maintenance, staffing, and operational aspects of a MLHC to 16 interested potential partners in the region.

Mobile Legal Help Center Presentation

Access to Justice Program Community Outreach Director Joann Low Torres, along with NYLAG MLHC Supervising Attorney Amy Hozer, presented at a 3-hour meeting in Broome County discussing replication of the MLHC in the Southern Tier. Ms. Torres provided detailed information about the design, purchase, maintenance, staffing, and operational aspects of a MLHC to 15 interested potential partners in the region.

Mobile Legal Help Center Presentation

Access to Justice Program Community Outreach Director Joann Low Torres, along with NYLAG MLHC Supervising Attorney Amy Hozer, presented at a 3-hour meeting in Erie County discussing replication of the MLHC in the Western Region. Ms. Torres provided detailed information about the design, purchase, maintenance, staffing, and operational aspects of a MLHC to 13 interested potential partners in the region.

Self-Help Services and Courtroom Innovations Working Group (see February)

This conference call meeting discussed court clerk engagement.

October

VLFD Housing Training

A 3.5-hour CLE credit training was held at the law offices of Paul Hastings LLP to 27 recent law graduates and attorneys. The entire class of first year associates was scheduled to attend the program in addition to other associates and partners. The training included live presentations on Negotiating and Drafting Stipulations of Settlement and Ethics for Volunteer Attorneys, and a video replay of Nonpayment Proceedings. VLFD Program training attendees committed to volunteer two days within 12 months in exchange for this training.

Court Navigator Program Training (Housing) (see February)

A training session was offered to 16 volunteers at the New York County Civil Court.

Combined Housing and Consumer Debt Court Navigator Program Training (see January)

Three college students and other approved volunteers were trained at the Bronx County Civil Court.

Guardians Ad Litem: Safeguarding Rights of Impaired Seniors Facing Eviction

GAL Program Coordinator Denise Colon-Greenaway co-presented a CLE workshop with Supervising Attorney Jennifer Berger from the District of Columbia, AARP Legal Counsel for the Elderly, at the American Bar Association 2016 National Aging and Law Conference in Alexandria, Virginia. The workshop discussed the role of GALs as distinguished from Guardians, the Legal Counsel for the Elderly Alternatives Project's eviction prevention model, and ideas for replicating these programs.

Indiana Heartland Pro Bono Counsel, Inc. Visit

The Heartland Pro Bono Counsel Plan Administrator from Indianapolis, Indiana visited with the Housing Court Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) Program Coordinator to specifically learn more about how the GAL Program operates and protects the rights of impaired litigants at risk for eviction.

GAL General Training (see June)

The GAL Program collaborated with White & Case, LLP to offer free training to two associates willing to be appointed to pro bono cases involving impaired litigants facing eviction in Bronx County. The training was provided in the New York County Civil Court and included an additional non-White & Case associate interested in participating in the Program as well.

Lay GAL Training (see January)

Three court-appointed GAL family members were trained.

Community Leaders Roundtable

The Access to Justice Program and the Interfaith Center Of New York held a Community Leaders Roundtable presentation and discussion was held in the New York County Civil Court. The Access to Justice Program presented information about various court services and community outreach programs. A total of 6 people attended.

High Court of Delhi, India Mediators

Justice Fern A. Fisher traveled to India and met with a group of mediators in the High Court of Delhi to discuss access to justice and alternative dispute resolution.

Self-Help Services and Courtroom Innovations Working Group (see February)

This conference call meeting discussed non-lawyer engagement.

November

Bridge the Gap Training

In honor of National Pro Bono Celebration Week, a comprehensive live basic training for the Housing, Consumer Debt and Uncontested Divorce Program was conducted for 35 attorneys at the New York County Civil Court over three days. In return for the full CLE training, which included ethics of unbundled representation, participants are required to complete a 50 hour supervised pro bono practicum in New York City Housing, Civil and Supreme Courts within six months of training, assisting litigants with housing, consumer debt and uncontested divorce matters in the Access to Justice Program's unbundled court-based legal services programs. This training fulfills the first or second year mandatory CLE requirements for recent law graduates and newly admitted attorneys.

Presentation on the Guardian Ad Litem Program

The GAL Program Coordinator presented to a group New York City housing providers and nonprofit organizations funded by the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development to help low-income individuals maintain safe and affordable housing. The presentation focused on the Housing Court Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) Program services, circumstances where a GAL appointment may be indicated, process for appointment, and the legal role of a GAL as distinguished from that of an Article 81 Guardian and an attorney. The presentation took place in New York county. Approximately 30 people were in attendance.

Poverty Simulation at Touro Law Center

A poverty simulation was held for the first year class of Touro Law Center. Approximately 73 students were in attendance and were assigned a role in a family unit. Each family was provided with family member descriptions, a description of the family's situation and a list of financial obligations to simulate a one month period living in poverty. Touro Law Center professors, second and third year law students volunteered to play the role of various community agencies and government staff. Following the simulation, a discussion was held during which the participants and the volunteers were given the opportunity to share their experience and reflect on the choices they made during the simulation.

Self-Help Services and Courtroom Innovations Working Group (see February)

This conference call meeting discussed private bar engagement.

December

Court Navigator Program Training (Housing) (see February)

A training session was held for 17 volunteers and one Housing Court Answers employee at the New York County Civil Court.

Supplemental Training on Abatement Hearings 101 (see July)

Eight volunteers were trained via a video replay at the New York County Civil Court.

GAL General Training (see June)

The GAL Program offered a previously recorded free CLE training to prospective GALs in the New York County Civil Court. Although many applied, 11 people successfully interviewed, completed background and reference checks, attended the training and were added to the GAL list.

Lay GAL Training (see January)

Five court-appointed GAL family members were trained.

Roma Advocates Visit

Justice Fern A. Fisher spoke to a group of visiting Roma attorneys about access to justice and ways to expand Roma rights in Europe. The meeting was organized by the Open Society Justice Initiative.

Self-Help Services and Courtroom Innovations Working Group (see February)

This conference call meeting discussed legal empowerment.

APPENDIX B: PERSONNEL TRAININGS

January

Help Us Help You: All About Court Help Centers

This live webinar was offered to all court system employees to explain and clarify the assistance that unrepresented litigants can receive in the Court Help Centers. This webinar highlighted what Help Centers do, what services are offered, who should be referred, and the special resources that some Help Centers offer. Attendees were shown where to find Help Center information on the Court's intranet, the Help Center pages on CourtHelp that have "What's There?" links, as well as information on the 3rd Judicial District's new Help Center. This webinar was attended by 35 court staff statewide, across nine judicial districts (missing 2,5,11 & 12).

Child Name Change DIY Form Program webinar

This new live 1.0-hour webinar was offered on two dates to all court system employees to educate court staff about the new Child Name Change DIY Form Program. The presenter demonstrated the new program and discussed the different instructions and court forms that are generated depending on the scenario. This webinar was attended by over 50 court staff statewide, across 12 judicial districts (missing 6th JD).

Help Center Training: Foreclosure

This 1.0-hour CLE live webinar explored the basics of a Foreclosure Action. Designed specifically for the needs of Court Help Center staff, the training focused on how the action is commenced, answers, common defenses, rights of a tenants in a foreclosure action, available forms, and online resources. A total of 57 people attended from 12 different upstate and down state Help Centers.

March

Attorneys' Use of DIY Forms

A skype presentation was made at the District Executives meeting about attorneys' use of DIY Forms. DIY Form programs are restricted to unrepresented litigants, pro bono attorneys and recognized lo bono attorneys. Justice Fern A. Fisher's advisory notice regarding attorneys' use of the programs and the affidavits for pro bono and lo bono use were discussed.

Unrepresented Litigant E-Filing Website Training

A 2.0-hour live training was conducted on the newly launched unrepresented litigant e-filing website: www.nycourts.gov/efile-unrepresented for the NYSCEF e-filing Resource Center staff. The training familiarized staff with the website so they would be better prepared to assist litigants over the phone. The training was held at the New York County Supreme Court.

April

Help Center & Law Librarian Training: Unrepresented Litigant E-filing Training

Taught by Access to Justice Chief Counsel Rochelle Klempner, this 1.0-hour webinar showcased the unrepresented litigant portion of the e-filing website and its resources. Originally intended for Court Help Center staff only, due to demand, the webinar was opened up to include all public access law librarians and other personnel. Over 40 people attended, including chief clerks, deputy chief clerks and court aides in addition to Help Center and law librarians' staffs.

Presentation for 4th JD Surrogate's Court Chief Clerks

A skype presentation was made for the 4th Judicial District's Surrogate's Court Chief Clerks on the resources available for unrepresented litigants. The Chief Clerks were given an overview of

the Surrogate's Court content on CourtHelp and the Surrogate's Court DIY Form programs. In addition, the new Advisory Notice on attorneys' use of the DIY Form programs was discussed.

Advocate Family Offense Petition Program's Telephone Appearance Option Showcase

A webinar was held for Family Court staff to showcase the telephone appearance option in the Family Offense Petition program. This feature has been in use in the New York City Family Courts since the program's inception. There were 25 attendees from all over the state. After the webinar, an additional five courts opted to include this feature.

May

Help Center Training: Service and the Unrepresented Litigant

A 1.0-hour Skills CLE training was held as a refresher course on service in civil actions in various courts. The webinar was taught by Kings County Help Center Court Attorneys Kahlil Winslow and Eric Tang. The CLE focused on various fact patterns, common scenarios, as well as practical tips for explaining service in procedure or as a defense. The CLE was attended by 22 Help Center staff members from across the state.

July

Help Center Training: Surrogate's Court and the Unrepresented Litigant

New York County Surrogate's Court Chief Clerk Diana Sanabria, presented a webinar explaining the type of actions Surrogate's Court has jurisdiction over. With a focus on cases that most unrepresented litigants typically file, this presentation explained when Surrogate's Court proceedings become necessary, it reviewed the basics of intestacy, how to commence an action, where to find resources, and problem solving common issues. This webinar was attended by 15 Help Center staff from across the state.

August

Help Center Training: Identifying and Addressing Elder Fraud, Exploitation & Abuse CLE

A 1.0-hour Ethics CLE training was held and explored the basics of identifying elder fraud, abuse and exploitation. The CLE was presented by Deirdre Lok, Assistant Director and General Counsel for The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Center for Elder Abuse Prevention at the Hebrew Home at Riverdale. Designed specifically to suit the needs of Help Center staff, the training focused on the types of abuse that the elderly fall victim to, the relevant ethics rules that apply, and the available resolutions that may be obtained through civil and criminal court. This was a live presentation in New York County Civil Court and skyped around the state. A total of 14 people attended from six different upstate and downstate Help Centers.

October

Help Center Training: Bankruptcy

A 1.0-hour webinar was presented via Skype by Jonathan Petts of Upsolve. Although state courts do not handle bankruptcy, feedback has shown that many unrepresented litigants request information about bankruptcy when visiting Help Centers. This webinar was tailored to provide Help Center personnel with the information and tools needed to direct unrepresented

litigants to the appropriate court when facing bankruptcy related issues. This webinar was attended by 23 Help Center staff from across the state.

DIY Update Family Court Chief Clerk Annual Meeting

A live presentation was given by Mike Williams and Dawn Maletta for the Family Court Chief Clerks at their annual meeting in Vernon, New York. Both Mr. Williams and Ms. Maletta are DIY Star award winners. The DIY update included: information on the new Family Court DIY intranet staff training videos; updates on the e-filing DIY documents into UCMS project; updates on the Family Offense project video conferencing project and telephone conferencing option for mobility challenged litigants; the shortened Financial Disclosure Form added to the DIY programs for all counties that adopted it to date; and progress on the simplification of the order of protection. DIY Form promotional cards were distributed.

Civil Court DIY Efficiency Training

A two-hour live presentation was given to approximately 20 city-wide Civil Court Chief and Deputy Chief Clerks on “How DIY Form Programs Can Increase Court Efficiency.” This presentation featured a panel of DIY experts: Suffolk County Family Court Chief Clerk Mike Williams, Kings County Civil Court Assistant Deputy Chief Clerk Melinda Alexander and Queens County Civil Court Assistance Deputy Chief Clerk Monica Dingle. The session was moderated by Access to Justice Program Chief Counsel Rochelle Klempner. Following individual presentations, a panel discussion was held responding to frequently asked questions.

CourtHelp Criminal Showcase

This new 1.0-hour Skype webinar was offered to all court personnel to showcase the new criminal-related content added to the CourtHelp website. The webinar primarily focused on the criminal court case basics, sentencing, crime victims, collateral consequences, getting rights back and criminal records, sections of the site. In addition, a short PowerPoint was presented outlining various ways that court staff can use the site to improve court efficiency and access to justice. Approximately 60 people from Help Centers, law libraries, and City, Criminal, Supreme, and County Courts around the state attended the live session.

November

CourtHelp Criminal Showcase (see October)

This live Skype webinar was attended by approximately 80 court personnel from 45 counties around the state.

December

Looking Forward: Housing Court in 2017 and Beyond

Jordan M. Dressler, Civil Justice Coordinator for the NYC Human Resources Administration’s Office of Civil Justice, presented the 2016 NYC Office of Civil Justice Annual Report at a Housing seminar for all NYC Housing Court Judges and Court Attorneys. Yacine Barry-Wun, Special Counsel for Housing Court Initiatives, provided an overview of the Housing pro bono programs, and announced the extension of the Court Navigator Program to all Resolution Parts city-wide in the near future and the recent expansion of the Volunteer Lawyer for the Day Program to include the litigation of traverse hearings and abatement hearings. Justice Fern A. Fisher invited all Housing Court Judges to serve on individual committees to chart the future of Housing Court together.

Small Estate DIY Form Program Training

This private 1.0-hour webinar was given for Kings County Surrogate’s Court staff. The webinar showcased the Small Estate DIY Form program. In addition, the instructions for recording the filing of DIY Forms in UCMS was reviewed.

Uncontested Divorce DIY Form Program Training

This 1.0-hour webinar was given to approximately 30 statewide Supreme Court Chief Clerks and Deputy Chief Clerks, Help Center Staff, Law Librarians, and 1-800 Operators. This webinar showcased both Part A and Part B of the Uncontested Divorce DIY Form program. Attendees were taught to identify unrepresented litigants eligible for the program, shown how to access and navigate the program and shown what the generated papers look like, so they can best assist the public.

Landlord-Tenant for Outside NYC DIY Form Program Training

This 1-hour webinar was given to approximately 20 statewide, District Executives, Chief Clerks, Deputy Chief Clerks, and Help Center Staff in District, City, Town and Village Courts. The webinar showcased the following programs: Nonpayment Petition, Licensee Holdover Petition, Squatter Holdover Petition, and Tenant Vacate Default Judgment. In addition, the instructions for recording the filing of DIY Forms in UCMS was reviewed.

Adult Name Change and Child Name Change DIY Form Program Training

This 1-hour webinar was presented to approximately 16 statewide, District Executives, Chief Clerks, Deputy Chief Clerks, and Help Center Staff. The webinar showcased the Adult Name Change and Child Name Change Programs. Attendees were shown how to access and navigate the programs and what papers are generated depending on the user's circumstances.

Vacate Default Judgment in a Consumer Debt Case DIY Form Program Training

This 1-hour webinar was given to approximately 19 statewide, District Executives, Chief Clerks, Deputy Chief Clerks, and Help Center Staff in District, City, Town and Village Courts. The webinar provided an overview of the Vacate Default Judgment in a Consumer Debt Case program for litigants with a default judgments against them in a Supreme, County, City, Civil, Town or Village Court.

APPENDIX C: SAMPLING OF SLIDESHOW SLIDES

我們會講你
 的語言

We speak your language (Chinese)

法院會免費為
你提供一名你
所選擇語言的
翻譯員

The court will provide a free interpreter in the language of your choice. (Chinese)

Nou Pale
 Lang
Ou a!

We speak your language! (Haitian Creole)

Мы Говорим
 На Вашем
Языке!

We speak your language (Russian)

Суд Назначит
Вам Бесплатного
Переводчика На
Языке Который
Вы Выберете.

The court will provide a free interpreter in the language of your choice. (Russian)

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Bay Ou
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Nan Lang__ou

The Court will provide a free interpreter in the language of your choice. (Haitian Creole)

確定法官可以
明白你所講的

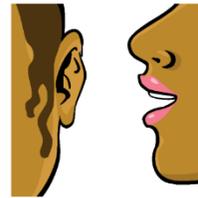
Make sure the court understands you (Chinese)

Говорете Так
Чтобы Суд
Понял Вас!

Make sure the court understands you! (Russian)

W fet Seten
Ke Tribinal La
Kompren Sa
Wap Di Yo!

Make sure the court understands you! (Haitian Creole)



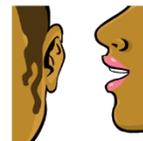
若需翻譯服務，請告知法
庭工作人員您需
要一名翻譯員。

To get an interpreter please tell court staff that you would like one (Chinese)



Если Вам нужен
переводчик,
пожалуйста, сообщите
об этом работнику Суда.

To get an interpreter please tell court staff that you would like one. (Russian)



Pou ou jwenn ou interpet
s'il vou plé di ou
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To get an interpreter please tell court staff that you would like one. (Haitian Creole)

APPENDIX D: UPDATED COURTHELP POSTCARD



COURT **Help** 

The CourtHelp website can help you when you don't have a lawyer

- **Find court forms and DIY Forms**
- **Locate court addresses and Help Centers**
- **Learn about foreclosures, custody, divorce, name changes, cases for money, child support, criminal cases, appeals, going to court, and more**

Visit www.nycourthelp.gov

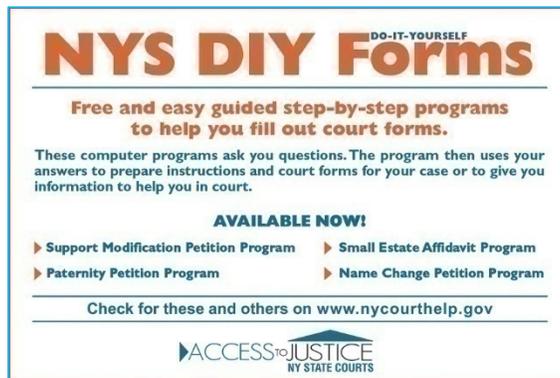


The content is enclosed in a white box with a thin black border. It features the "COURT Help" logo with a blue and white color scheme. To the right of the logo is a red bar containing white silhouettes of a diverse group of people. Below the logo, there is a blue horizontal line, followed by the text "The CourtHelp website can help you when you don't have a lawyer". This is followed by a bulleted list of three items, each starting with a red square. Below the list is another blue horizontal line, followed by the text "Visit www.nycourthelp.gov" in red. At the bottom is the "ACCESS to JUSTICE NY STATE COURTS" logo.

APPENDIX E: UPDATED MULTI-PROGRAM DIY FORM POSTCARD



Multi-Program Front



Old Multi-Program Back



New Multi-Program Back

APPENDIX F: ACCESS TO JUSTICE EFFORTS THROUGHOUT NEW YORK STATE

3rd Judicial District

Educational Outreach

- The Third Judicial District encourages educational programs sponsored by the various Bar Associations in the District through the use of Court facilities and UCS employees volunteering their time. Throughout the year, Sullivan County Bar Associations sponsored mock trials for high school students.

Civic Outreach

- The District is part of a coalition with the Capital District Pro Bono Committee that meets regularly to discuss pro bono services. The CDPBC is comprised of several agencies including: The Legal Project, Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York (LASNNY), Albany County Bar Association (ACBA), Prisoners Legal Services of New York, and Albany Law School's Pro bono Program. Throughout the year CDPBC sponsors many events.

Help Center

- The Capital District Pro Bono Committee (CDPBC) continues to support the Help Center located in the Albany County Family Court, which is staffed by volunteer attorneys from the Capital District. The Third Judicial District also supports the Help Center through IT services and equipment.
- September 29, 2016, the efforts of Laura Hankin, Law Library Assistant in forming the Columbia County Help Center were recognized when she received the New York State Courts Access to Justice Program's DIY Star Award.

Continuing Legal Education

- In an effort to encourage pro bono volunteers from the local legal community various organizations associated with the Capital District Pro Bono Committee (CDPBC) offer Continuing Legal Education. Over the past year the following programs have been offered including: Prisoners' Legal Services of New York hosted a training on "Seeking Early Conditional Parole for Deportation Only, How to Represent a Person Applying for Executive Clemency," which focused on Governor Cuomo's initiative to provide legal assistance to individuals seeking clemency. Albany County Bar Association hosted a CLE regarding name change and transgender name change. The Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York sponsored a free CLE at the NYS Bar Association entitled: "Attorney Emeritus Program: Ethically Engaging Pro Bono Work to Improve Access to Justice," which focused on the ethical considerations of performing pro bono services, and a full day training and CLE regarding "Representing DV Victims in Family Court." The Gender Fairness Committee of the 3d Judicial District is hosting a CLE entitled "Language Access and Domestic Violence: Speaking the Victim's Language."

Special Programs

- During 2016, members of the Capital District Pro Bono Committee (CDPBC) met to discuss on going needs for pro bono services in the Capital District and plan events. A representative of the New York State Bar Association met with the district to help coordinate activities, including CLE's and other events.
- During May 2016, the Capital District Pro Bono Committee (CDPBC) participated in the New York State Bar Associations 2016 President's Pro Bono Service Awards. Denise Resta Tobin, Esq., was recognized for efforts over the last eight years assisting victims of domestic violence through The Legal Project's pro bono panel.

4th Judicial District

Educational Outreach

- St. Lawrence County. Non-judicial personnel from the St. Lawrence Supreme Court Law Library provided legal research and reference presentations to local high school and college students throughout the year.

5th Judicial District

Educational Outreach

- Herkimer County Family Court. Family Court Judge continued the “Truancy Program” in an attempt to address potential truancy issues before they reach the PINS or Neglect filing stages. Representatives from agencies including: Family Court, Department of Social Services, Probation, PINS Diversion, school officials collaborated to determine issues related to truancy and identify techniques, strategies and resources overcome the issue. School representatives, parents and students are provided with an outline of the services that are available to assist families with attendance issues. One of the goals of the program is to improve communication concerning absences, and to facilitate referrals to agencies and providers who can assist parents and children who struggle with a wide variety of school attendance issues, including social (bullying), medical, psychological, behavioral or supervision issues. The program was initiated by Family Court Judge John Brennan five years ago and it has been successful in both reducing the number of court referrals and the number of days of absences. In 2016 meetings were held in January and March. Programs have commenced for the 2016-2017 school year.
- Lewis County. Judicial and non-judicial personnel conducted presentations to schools regarding court operations and programs. Lowville Academy School visited and watched the grand jury orientation film. In addition, students attended a courtroom proceeding and later interacted with the judge, district attorney and public defender.
- Oneida County Supreme and County Courts. Students from the Oneida County Excellence Program and Oneida County BOCES program interned with the courts from one day to one week with the Chief or Deputy Chief clerk shadowing and observing court proceedings. In January the court held an evening educational program to members of the Oneida County Bar Association regarding the E-filing. In April, Chief Clerk and Deputy Chief Clerk participated the MVCC Career Fair and Criminal Justice Expo. Questions were answered from students who were interested in a career in the court system.
- Onondaga County Family Court. April 4, 2016 – Non-judicial personnel attended a Better for Families - Statewide Systems Reform Program training in Albany, NY. Onondaga County has been identified as one of 5 pilot programs throughout the state. The program will be rolled out to other counties within the next several months.
- In June 2016 , A Better for Families - Statewide Systems Reform Program– Training was provided to legal professionals and court staff as part of grant funding from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) to improve outcomes for families involved in family court, child welfare and the chemical dependency systems. Staff were invited to the introductory session to review the Better for Families Statewide Systems Reform Program in Onondaga County and how pilot efforts will impact practice across disciplines.

- In collaboration with the Child Welfare Court Improvement Project, legislative updates were provided by Margaret Burt, Esq. and training in Non-Respondent Parent Bill was moderated by Honorable Michele Pirro Bailey.
In April the court staff hosted the “Bring Your Child to Work Day.”
- Onondaga County Surrogate’s Court. The court’s website <http://www.nycourts.gov/courts/5jd/onondaga/surrogate/index.shtml> continues to be updated in order to provide information to the public about free legal assistance opportunities and offer useful links including a link to www.nycourthelp.gov.

Civic Outreach

- Herkimer County Family Court. On an ongoing basis, Herkimer County Family Court is actively engaged with schools and the community to provide information regarding court proceedings. In 2016, a Family Court Judge held group sessions at Family Court and at schools within Herkimer County in which students were provided an outline of the jurisdiction of the Family Court, a description of the nature of Family Court proceedings, followed by a question and answer period. Sessions were held in January at Central Valley Academy School for its “Students to Careers” program; In March at Poland Central School for its Civics & Government students; In April at Family Court for Countywide Law and Government Students, and in October for the 4H Cooperative Extension Law & Government Students.
- Oneida County Supreme and County Courts. The Chief Clerk is a member of the New Visions Consultant Committee for the Oneida Madison County BOCES program. The group meets regularly to determine how to meet the needs of students interested in Law Careers.
- Onondaga County. Judges and Court staff assisted Syracuse University’s Newhouse School of Journalism with classes on news coverage of court proceedings.
Judges and staff from this county also participated in many charitable events through churches and other not for profit charitable organizations.
- Onondaga County Family Court. Judicial and non-judicial staff participated in the Vera House training-a one-hour program for Judges and court personnel on Elder Abuse. Non-judicial staff provided training to approximately 20 employees at Vera House on Family Court Operations, Domestic Violence Advocate Assisted Petition Program and the Paperless initiative.
- Oswego Family Court. Staff attended the 4H Awards Ceremony, Mexico Middle School in October, participated in the Oswego County Youth Forum event in October, participated in National Adoption Day in November, participated in the orientation meeting for the 2017 Regional Mock Trial competition in December, and hosted a Criminal Justice Class visit and discussion at the Oswego Family Court Courthouse in November.
Hosted high school students, college interns, college students, and City-County Youth Court members.
Member of the City-County Youth Board of Directors.
Conducted the swearing in of new Youth Court members in the Supreme Court Courtroom in September.
Guest Speaker at the HOBY (a national Youth Leadership conference) dinner program was held at SUNY Oswego in June.

Court Tours

- Lewis, Oneida, Onondaga, and Syracuse counties held numerous court tours throughout the year.

Help Center

- Jefferson County Family. This court has a pro bono legal clinic that is held at Family Court every other Thursday from noon to 3:00 p.m. Litigants who meet a certain income level are eligible for this program.

- Onondaga County Surrogate's Court. Continuous promotion of the use of DIY programs and assistance/facilitation by court staff and Syracuse University College of Law Extern using a dedicated public computer and monitor, the latter of which was given to the court in recognition of being the very first recipient of the DIY Star Award. Continuous accessibility to the public of court's records via an internet connected database ("OnBase"). This accessibility is an aid to unrepresented litigants since it provides a review of prior proceedings in the court. While every matter is different, the unrepresented litigants are able to independently search similar types of proceedings to determine the documents and the format of documents used in various proceedings which, in turn, may serve as a resource of procedural "how to" information. The number of "hits" on OnBase in the first nine months were in excess of 79,000.
- Onondaga County Family Court: ongoing referrals by Judicial & Non-judicial Staff to the Parent Support Program, an in-house employment assistance/referral program funded by Onondaga County.
- Syracuse City Court: A monitor located in the public hallway outside Civil Part which constantly scrolls a slideshow presentation regarding DIY Forms for Landlord Tenant actions.

Law Day

- Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, and Syracuse counties held Law Day celebrations.

Volunteer Lawyers Project

- Onondaga County Family Court. Every Wednesday & Friday, volunteer attorneys provide free legal advice to low income clients needing assistance with custody/visitation and/or child support issues. Non-judicial court staff refer individuals to the program on an ongoing basis. Referrals are made by judicial and non-judicial staff to the New Justice, an in-house mediation referral service that assist individuals with mediating custody/visitation petitions. Referrals are made by judicial and non-judicial staff to the Parent Support Program, an in house employment assistance/referral program funded by Onondaga County. The court continues its efforts to increase awareness about adoption and the foster care systems by creating another edition of 'Faces of Adoption in the Fifth Judicial District'. The photo books are distributed to agencies and courts to encourage support and awareness of the need for foster and adoptive homes. The court continues its efforts to fully implement the legislation requiring that all children 10 years and older old be notified of their rights and are assisted in attending their permanency hearings. This project enhances access to justice for the youth population.
- Onondaga County Surrogate's Court. Free legal counsel and assistance is provided to unrepresented low-income litigants. In 2015 the VLP incorporated as a separate 501(C) (3) organization, "The Volunteer Lawyers Project of Onondaga County, Inc." ("VLP, Inc."), and operates the Surrogate's Court Free Legal Clinic as an on-going project assisting unrepresented litigants every Wednesday from 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. using equipment and space provided by the court. Services, by appointment and walk-ins (time permitting), include consultations and assistance as needed in completing forms and other documents. In excess of 85 pro se litigants were served in the first nine months of 2016.
- Through outreach by the local bar, including a CLE program presented in conjunction with VLP Inc., in February 2016, and literature made available in the court and on the court's website, the public and the bar are made aware of this valuable resource.
- Syracuse City Court: Volunteer lawyers available outside of the Landlord/Tenant part each weekday morning to assist parties with landlord/tenant actions.

6th Judicial District

Educational Outreach

- Otsego County Multi-Bench. Local high and college students continue to enjoy presentations from Judges on various court related topics. This year, the presentations included the Judicial Response to the Heroin Epidemic. In addition, staff assisted in coordinating workshops with local minority groups and the NAACP in response to the incidents involving minority/law enforcement interactions and in particular judiciary involvement.
Supreme Court Justice continues his involvement in a cultural exchange program through the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs by hosting young adults from Africa. A Judge Rumsey delivers lectures and conducts workshops on American jurisprudence and policy.
- Madison County Multi Bench Judge delivered an address at the American Legion Boy's State program at Morrisville College. Participants were engaged in a question and answer exchange on a wide array of topics.
Multi Bench judge was the keynote speaker at the Leadership Cortland symposium, which addressed a wide array of issues including law enforcement and community interaction.
- Judicial and non-judicial employees participated in the Tompkins- Seneca-Tioga BOCES Senior Criminal Justice class.
- District employees participated in many job fairs throughout the year to recruit potential employees.

Civic Outreach

- District Wide Access. The 6th Judicial District regularly provides and strongly encourages Access to Justice training and opportunities at all levels. The Special Counsel for Town and Village Courts facilitates training and regularly attends magistrate meetings. The judges, clerks and court officers routinely present at events designed to provide the public, especially litigants, with accurate and up to date information on the District, Courts and their staff.

Court Tours

- Broome, Chenango, Otsego, Madison, Schuyler, and Tioga counties held numerous court tours throughout the year.
- Tompkins County judges and the clerk's office, in consultation with Cornell University, provided presentations to high school students interested in the law. Activities included conducting mock trials, observing actual courtroom activity, and touring back office facilities.

7th Judicial District

Educational Outreach

- The 7th Judicial District has an active student ambassador internship program and community outreach. These programs promote community engagement and educational partnerships through the collaborative efforts of the district with numerous high schools, colleges and universities. The program's model provides students with opportunities for personal and professional growth as well as provides knowledge of the NYS Court System.

A multidiscipline internship committee is dedicated to the continuous improvement of the ambassador program, community outreach and to raising awareness of the NYS Court System. It is expected that participation in these programs will result in enhancing community knowledge and access to the courts.

- Career & Internship Fairs. SUNY Geneseo College, Bryant & Stratton and University of Rochester.
- Steuben. In September family law case updates were provided for 4th Department Attorney for the Child Program.
- Oct. 25 Family law case update for Steuben County Bar association.
- Monroe County BOCES New Visions: Provided Job Shadowing and Court Observation opportunities for 16 High School seniors participating in the Monroe County Sheriff's Department's Criminal Justice Program. (January 12 – April 28 / September 27 – Present)
- Monroe County. The Norman Howard School-The Dangers of Social Media Presentation: Presented to 5th-12th graders about the importance of a positive digital footprint and its effect long-term. February 24 / 90-100 in Attendance
- Mock Trial Competition: Seneca Waterways Council-Boy Scouts Law Explorers held at the Hall of Justice. (April 23 – 50 Youth Participated / 100 in Attendance)
- City of Rochester Summer Youth Employment Program: Provided hands-on work experience to at-risk, high school students ages 16-18 years old who are interested in pursuing a career in the courts and/or the field of criminal justice. These youth had no previous work experience and were here to learn how to work in a professional setting. (July 5 – August 26) Youth were placed with Rochester City Court, Teen Court and Family Court
- City of Rochester Summer Youth Law Prep Program: "Courthouse Scavenger Hunts" for at-risk youth working through a city grant which provides youth ages 14 -15 years old an opportunity to visit the courthouse and is designed to educate, create positive connections and dispel common misconceptions about the judicial system. (July 15 – August 12, 2016)
- Brown Bag Lunch Series; Career Lecture for Students: A lecture hosted by the 7th District's Internship Committee to provide high school through college students with an opportunity to learn about "both sides of the Criminal Justice system" while exploring speaker's backgrounds, education, career paths and recommendations for prospective applicants. July 13, 2016 Speakers were from the Monroe County District Attorney and Public Defender's Office, Corporate Counsel for the City of Rochester and the 4th Judicial Department.
- Lunch and Learn: Family Court: Judge provided a presentation to a group of high school and college freshman about her career path, Family Court and its different parts. (July 22)

Civic Outreach

- "Day at the Courthouse" Program: Workforce Diversity Committee partnered with GRAWA (Greater Rochester Association for Women Attorneys) to host an educational/career exploration program for local Girl Scout Troops on March 31.

Court Tours

- More than 100 tours conducted at Monroe, Seneca and Steuben County Courthouses of elementary, middle, high school, and the general public.

Special Court Tours

- Girl Scouts from Troops #51074 (Rochester) & #51041 (Avon) participated in a tour in an effort to earn their "Inside Government" badges. In addition to the regular tour, time was spent time visiting the Drug Court and the Law Library.
- As a follow up to seeing the play, "Twelve Angry Men," 105 8th grade students from Webster Willink Middle School visited a courthouse and were exposed to the judicial process. In addition to the regular tour, students participated in a mock trial and attended different court cases in the County and Supreme Courts.
- Gates-Chili Brasserie Safety & Student Council (75 Participants Ages 9-12). Students who served as safety patrol members and student council representatives toured the courthouse

to gain a better understanding of public safety and the judicial process. In addition to the regular tour, students were toured through the Sheriff's Department.

- Orleans County Upward Bound Program (30 Participants Ages 17-18) sponsored by the Research Foundation at the College of Brockport is designed to provide support to high school students in Orleans County who are potential first generation college students. The program provided students with an opportunity to explore careers in the criminal justice/legal fields by touring the Hall of Justice and Arraignment parts. Students also visited the main offices on each floor and the Law library.
- OACES Refugees (22 Participants Ages 18-24) MAC (Making a Connection) Academy's purpose is to connect refugee teens/young adults with the Rochester Community to provide them with a link to services. The goal of this tour was to provide general information about the courts in relation to what may be encountered down the road as citizens (i.e. landlord/tenant issues, civil issues, jury service). In addition to a regular tour, attendees visited the Jury Office to learn about the jury service and the process.

Cultural Awareness

- Access to Justice Presentation to the Leadership Team at the IBERO American Action League. Discussion included Court Help programs, Do It Yourself Program, and the Help Desk. Discussion on how the courts are working to improve and expand access to justice for under-represented groups.
- Appearance on WXXI, National Public Radio program to discuss the Access to Justice Program and the programs offered.
- Appearance on Local Latino Radio program to discuss the Access to Justice Program and the importance of juror participation.
- Court Awareness Program sponsored a tour and full day informational meeting for MCC Students. A tour of the Hall of Justice including the Treatment Court, Law Library and City Court was held. Presentation topics included an overview of human resources, court reporting, court security and a guest speaker speaking about her career path.
- Ongoing outreach to local agencies such as IBERO, the Urban League, Catholic Family Services, MCC and SUNY Brockport etc. regarding services available via the Access to Justice Program. Educational/Informational articles via the 7th Judicial District Newsletter. Information displays at the various courthouses in the 7th Judicial District
- Throughout the year, public informational/display resource tables have been set up at the Hall of Justice for Black History, Martin Luther King Jr., LGBTQ and Hispanic Heritage.
- District newsletters produced regularly featuring articles on Black History and Hispanic Heritage months.
- 7th Judicial District Briefly Newsletter- quarterly featured articles honoring Diversity and Cultural Awareness.
- Black History program. Panel discussion and Dance.
- Woman's History, Susan B. Anthony House historical and present day discussion.
- March 9th LGBTQ Pride Event. Several guest speakers discussed their personal and work experience with the courts as a Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender or Queer person. Informational presentation was offered regarding the LGBTQ rights.
- Throughout the year public informational display/resource tables are set up at the Hall of Justice: Black History, Martin Luther King, LGBTQ and Hispanic Heritage.
- 7th Judicial District's Diversity Committee Programs: Access to Justice Panel presentation for community agencies and Monroe Community College students. Discussion on how the courts are working to improve and expand access to justice for unrepresented litigants. District HR office offered information on access to careers in the courts.

Help Center

- It is estimated that approximately 2800 people have been served. The Court Help Center has provided procedural and legal information on more than 19 different areas of law. The most popular topics include domestic relations, landlord tenant matters and small claims.

Help Center Advisory Committee

- This committee consists of 7th Judicial District Judges, Chief Clerks, attorneys and agency representatives. The committee collectively offers guidance and support of the operational needs of the Help Center, strategies to enhance public awareness of available services and ongoing outreach opportunities to increase attorney participation.

Special Programs

- Students in high school and in Law school interned throughout the courts.
- City of Rochester & Rochester Works Employer Appreciation Breakfast: Spoke on behalf of the district's Student Ambassador Program regarding the importance of positive exposure and experience for at-risk youth in the community and the role the court system plays in providing summer work experience for 16-18 year olds through the Summer Youth Employment grant.
- Norman Howard School Participation in Government. Monroe City Court Law Clerk spoke to high school seniors about social media, the law and the legal ramifications
- Bryant & Stratton Lunch & Learn Panel Series-Criminal Justice and Paralegal Careers. Guest speaker on panel with an ADA from the DA's office, Monroe Co. Sheriff's Dept., airport security and a law firm paralegal on topics related to employment, career paths, internships.
- Language Line- All courthouses throughout the District have at least one Language Line phone at a court clerk's office public counter for individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP).
- 2016 Family Offense Petition Generation System, has been expanded to all domestic violence advocacy agencies in the District and to the Monroe Probation Department. Enables the generation of a family offense petition by an authorized agent with a copy of the petition provided to the victim and electronically sent to the court. Although, the litigant is still required to appear before the court and file this streamlines the process for petitioner.
- November 2016. Monroe County Family Court issuance of temporary orders of protection via audio visual means – a pilot launch in November allow petitioners seeking a temporary ex-parte family court Order of Protection from the University of Rochester Medical Center to apply for the TOP by electronically submitting their petition and providing testimony through the use of Skype. Willow DV agency provided an on-site hospital based advocate to assist petitioners meeting the requirements set forth in the court protocols.
- Monroe Supreme and County Court has collaborated with The Empire Justice Center to provide a dedicated Program assisting homeowners with the Foreclosure Court Settlement Conference Process.
- Hoekelman Center University of Rochester Medical Center: Pediatric Links with the Community Program (PLC) May 9th and September rotations. This community-based learning experience, has become the national model for training physicians and medical students in community health and community engagement. Monroe Family Court offers pediatric and family practice residents court rotation in Family Court to learn about the Family Court system through first-hand observation of court proceedings and opportunity to speak with the sitting Judge.
- September 2016, Hurrell-Hearing Training offered to the Town and Village Justices throughout the District.
- October 2016, Domestic Violence Danger Assessment training for court staff, attorneys and partner agencies in Monroe.

8th Judicial District

Educational Outreach

- Buffalo City Court and Erie County Family Court hosted an internship program for undergraduate students and law school students. Interns observed regular and specialty court proceedings and were assigned to offices to become familiar with the criminal and civil process. Other interns were assigned to specific judges where they worked directly under the judge's supervision.
- Lunch-n-Learn sessions were conducted to provide staff and the public with study guide information/material regarding the Court Clerk exam that was scheduled for May 2016. The sessions were videotaped and posted on the court intranet for future use.
- The District Volunteer Summer Internship Program was offered to first and second year law school students. The Program hosted seventeen (17) law students who were assigned to judges in the District. The Interns conducted legal research, wrote memoranda and participated in Court proceedings under the supervision of individual judges or other court personnel. The program also included weekly seminars on various legal topics. The objective was to encourage qualified students to seek permanent employment with state courts following graduation.

Civic Outreach

- An overview of the per diem Court Interpreter and regular Court Interpreter exams and its process was presented to the public. Handouts and applications were provided to potential applicants.
- The District Administrative Office actively participated in at least six (6) job fairs annually to educate college students about careers in the Courts. Historically the job fairs take place at Bryant and Stratton, Hilbert, Erie Community College and the BETC. This year the District Office participated in a fair with the Department of Labor.

Court Tours

- Tours for various schools including: North Tonawanda High School, Orleans BOCES, Williamsville East High School, Buffalo Public School 66, Mount Mercy Academy, Tapestry Charter School, Orchard Park High School and Forestville Elementary school were conducted throughout the year.

Help Center

- Eighth Judicial District Court Help Center is located in the Supreme Court Law Library. Every year it serves 7,200 people. It is staffed by a full-time Court Attorney. The most frequent case inquiries at the 8th Judicial District Court Help Center relate to: matrimonial matters, name change petitions, consumer credit transactions, post-judgment matrimonial matters. The 8th Judicial District expanded the range of services offered at the Court Help Center in 2014 through collaboration with Legal Aid Bureau and Western New York Law Center who provide volunteer attorneys empowered to give legal advice.
- Erie County Family Court. The Help Center is staffed by volunteer attorneys from the Volunteer Lawyers Project, Inc. Since its opening in 2013 it has assisted over 1,800 unrepresented litigants.
- Buffalo City Court. The court offers three (3) significant programs to assist unrepresented litigants: CLARO volunteer lawyers assists with consumer credit transactions, Attorney for the Day Program assists with landlord/tenant eviction proceedings, and the Court Arbitration Program assists unrepresented litigants with settlement of civil lawsuits.
- Erie Supreme and County Court collaborates with the City of Buffalo and civil legal service providers annually to open a one-stop center in Part 27 to assist unrepresented litigants with

settlement on in rem tax foreclosure matters. Thousands of tax foreclosure cases are settled annually in this part.

- Erie Supreme and County Court pro-actively operate a residential foreclosure conferencing Part where unrepresented litigants are paired with an attorney from the Western New York Law Center. Over 50% of the cases scheduled in the foreclosure conferencing part reach a settlement with the bank.
- Erie County Surrogate's Court. The court offers an attorney for the day project. On a daily basis a Court Attorney is assigned to assist unrepresented litigants who seek assistance with navigating through Erie County Surrogate's Court.

Cultural Awareness

- In observance of Black History Month, a luncheon highlighting ethnic food was held in Buffalo City Court. All court employees were invited to attend.
- Black History Month celebration included a presentation from guest speaker, Tina M. Stanford, Esq., Chairwoman, NYS Board of Parole.
- Gay Pride Month. An event was hosted by the Eighth Judicial District, Gender & Racial Fairness Committee. The guest speaker was Marvin L. Henchbarger, Executive Director of Gay and Lesbian Youth Services, Inc.
- District Executive met with the Karen Society of Buffalo Board and its members and provided presentations about the history of the courts, access to justice, language access, and court interpreting. Question and answer sessions followed. The Karen Society represents about 6,000 Buffalo residents; most are recent refugees from Burma.

Law Day

- On May 13, 2016 a Law Day program was held in the Supreme Court Ceremonial
- Courtroom. The Law Day theme was "Miranda: More than Words." Students participated from eight (8) public high schools throughout Buffalo, New York. The ceremonial courtroom was filled to capacity with 200 students. The event was moderated by Desiree Wiley from WKBW, Channel 7 and chaired by Honorable Craig Hannah, Buffalo City Court Judge.

9th Judicial District

Educational Outreach

- Dutchess County. May 19, 2016, students from Forrest Elementary School attended a court tour. April 2016, Judges in Dutchess County Court hosted three court tours. Students from FDR High School, Rhinebeck High School and Pawling High School participated in the court tour.
- Orange County. April 2, 2016, a judge participated in the Orange Regional Mock Trials. April 6, 2016, a judge participated in the Middletown High School Career Day. April 18, 2016, a judge serves as a speaker at the SUNY Newburgh Campus-Criminal Justice Program. May 26, 2016, a judge participated in the Bronx Middle School College's Career Day. June 2, 2016, a city court judge gave a presentation to the Rehabilitation Support Services about the Mental Health Court Connection Program. June 8, 2016, a judge served as a speaker for the Greenleaf and Bauer Scholarship Award ceremony.
- Putnam County. January 14, 2016, a judge visited with 6th grade Girl Scouts and their parents at George Fisher Middle School. January 14, 2016, a judge hosted Pace Law student and University of North Carolina. January 19, 2016, a judge attended and participated in Victim Impact Panel at Putnam Hospital Center. January 21, 2016, a judge attended the Putnam County Alternatives to Incarceration Advisory Board Meeting. February 23, 2016, a judge attended Pre-Prom meeting at NCADD. March 1, 2016, a judge

participated in Mahopac High School Junior Prom Presentation. March 9, 2016, a judge participated in Mahopac High School's Junior Pre-Prom Presentation, March 11, 2016, a judge participated in Brewster High School Pre-Prom Presentation, March 14, 2016, a judge participated in Brewster High School Pre-Prom Presentation, Brewster, New York., March 15, 2016, a judge participated in Carmel High School Pre-Prom Presentation at Carmel High School, March 28, 2016, a judge participated in Brewster High School Pre-Prom Presentation, April 1, 2016, a judge participated in Pre-Prom Presentation; Brewster High School, April 7, 2016, a judge participated in the "The Drug Epidemic: A Judicial Perspective," a discussion on drug use and treatment in the county, April 14, 2016, a judge attended and spoke at Drug Crisis in Our Backyard Forum, focusing on the judicial implications of the Drug Epidemic; held at the Donald B. Smith Training Center, April 20, 2016, a judge participated in the Mahopac High School Career and Service Learning Fair, April 26, 2016, a judge participated in Putnam Valley Pre-Prom Presentation, May 4, 2016, a judge participated in Mahopac High School's Senior Pre-Prom Presentation, May 18, 2016, a judge participated in a presentation regarding Peer Mentoring at Carmel High School, and May 24, 2016, a judge participated in Mahopac High School Senior Pre-Prom Presentation.

- Rockland County. February to September 2016, judges in Rockland County met with stakeholders to promote the work of the courts. Stakeholders include but are not limited to: Big Brother Big Sisters, Rockland County Probation Department, Court Improvement Committee, and the Rockland County Sheriff Department. February 26, 2016, a judge conducted a presentation for attorneys about the IDV court.
- Westchester County. February 27, 2016, a judge served as the guest speaker at the Pace University's Black Student Union Black Excellence Program, March 15, 2016, the Principal Settlement Coordinator gave a presentation at Pace Law School regarding the 9th JD Internship Program, April 2016, a family court judge served as a speaker and mentor for the "Her Honor" Mentoring Program, April 22, 2016, a family court judge participated in the Great Read Aloud Program at Jefferson Elementary School, June 22, 2016, a judge participated in the NY Legal Education Opportunity Program where they addressed 24 students and teachers, May 19, 2016, a judge gave a presentation at the Westchester County Senior Law Day, June 1, 2016, a judge presented at the WCBA Guardian Ad Litem CLE Seminar, and June 22, 2016, non-judicial personnel from Westchester Surrogate's Court participated in the NY LEO Fellowship as a speaker.
- Districtwide Summer Law Internship Program. The District Administrative Judge's Office, in conjunction with the city, county and supreme courts, hosted interns from law schools, colleges, and high school. The DAJ Office is responsible for overseeing the summer law school internship program. The District's Summer Law Internship Program received over 100 applications. This year 59 students were placed districtwide. The interns were assigned to work with judges and chamber staff where they learned about legal research, writing, and court proceedings.
- Dutchess County Internship Program. Judges and non-judicial personnel from Dutchess Family Court hosted four college interns from Vassar and Marist College.
- Orange County Internship Program. March to June 2016, judges in Orange Supreme and County Court hosted three interns from Hofstra University, Syracuse University College of Law, and Pine Bush High School.
- Putnam County Internship Program. The county court hosted 7 college student interns.
- Westchester County Internship Program. April to June 2016, judges from a city court hosted two interns from Peekskill High School and Yorktown High School-WISE Program, April to June 2016, judges from Westchester Family Court hosted seven interns from the Syracuse Law School and the "Her Honor" Mentor Program, June 6, 2016, an orientation was held for 50 student interns, and June 6-24, 2016, the Westchester County Surrogate's Court hosted

two legal interns from Italy and one intern from the New York State Bar Association Trusts and Estate Section Fellowship Program.

Civic Outreach

- Orange County. January- June 2016, a judge from Orange County volunteered at Fed by Grace Food Pantry, March 2016, a judge from Orange Supreme and County Court attended Leadership Orange, and May 5, 2016, a judge from Orange Supreme and County Court attended the Holocaust Remembrance Service.
- Putnam County. February 19, 2016, a judge attended a reception at Putnam Family and Community Services to represent Carmel Rotary, February 25, 2016, a judge attended the Annual Putnam County Magistrate's Meeting, February 29, 2016, a judge met with Putnam County Sheriff's Cadets, March 3, 2016, a judge attended Relay for Life Kickoff Dinner, March 6, 2016, a judge attended American Legion of Mahopac's Monthly Meeting, March 8, 2016, a judge attended the Carmel Fire Department monthly meeting, March 12, 2016, a judge attended the Community Basketball Shoot-out, held at Carmel High School gymnasium, sponsored by the Carmel Rotary Club at the Carmel High School Interact Club, April 2, 2016, a judge attended "Smiling Warrior Lives on with St. Baldricks Saturday," to benefit the prevention of Childhood Cancer, and April 10, 2016, a judge participated in Mahopac "Walk MS".
- Westchester County. April 9, 2016, a judge attended the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn's 39th Annual Estate Planning Conference at the Immaculate Conception Center, April 29, 2016, a city court judge gave a presentation to the Rye Rotary Club membership about how the Rye City Court works, June 2, 2016, a judge served as the Keynote Speaker at the 10th Annual "Above the Bar" Awards Dinner at Pace Law School, June 10, 2016, a judge served as a speaker at the Annual Armed Forces Dinner, and also a family court judge attended the following events: Westchester Building Futures, NYPD Office Peter Liang Case: Community Discussion, "Make it Happen" Community Event, and the Youth Assistance Program.

Court Tours

- Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland and Westchester counties held numerous court tours throughout the year.

Help Center

- The 9th Judicial District Court Help Center provides free court and procedural information to *pro se* litigants. The Help Center staff, which consists of a staff attorney and a court analyst, assisted 2,564 *pro se* litigants from January 1, 2016 to April 30, 2016. Of the 2,564 *pro se* litigants, 2,358 were residents of the 9th JD which encompasses five counties (Westchester, Putnam, Dutchess, Rockland and Orange) and 206 litigants resided outside of the 9th JD.

Law Day

- Orange, Putnam, Rockland and Westchester counties held Law Day celebrations.

Pro bono

- Westchester County. Uncontested Divorce Clinic - the Pro Bono Coordinator held Uncontested Divorce Clinic which assists *pro se* litigants in preparing uncontested divorce papers. This clinic is held every Tuesday.

Professional Organizations

- Dutchess County. February 6, 2016, a judge from Dutchess Family Court gave a presentation to the Junior League of Poughkeepsie at Dutchess Community College.
- Putnam County. January 5, 2016, a judge attended Communities that Care meeting at Cornerstone Park.
- Westchester County. April -June 2016, attendance at twelve events sponsored by the following professional organizations: New York Women's Bar Association, White Plains Bar

Association, NYS Trial Lawyers Association and the Bronx Woman's Bar Association. April 20, 2016, a family court judge served as a panelist at the New York Bar Judicial Program, and May 4-7, 2016, a judge served as a speaker at the New York State Bar Association's Trusts & Estates Conference.

10th Judicial District Nassau County

Educational Outreach

- Approximately 80 law students were offered the opportunity to participate in an organized and structured internship program with the Courts in Nassau County. Majority of Judges and Law Clerks in the Supreme Court, Surrogate Court, County Court, District Court, Family Court and City Court participated by agreeing to have an intern or two work with chambers and their trial part for a period of 10 weeks. The program provides all interns, practical mock jury trial exercises, and networking opportunities between the students and the local bar associations.
- High School Mock Trial Tournament. The Courts in Nassau County partnered with the Nassau County Bar Association and the New York State Bar Association to sponsor a high school mock trial tournament. Overseen by the New York State Bar Association in every county of the state, the program in Nassau County is the single biggest competition in the State. Approximately 500 students, teachers and parents representing 46 private and public high schools participated in the three-month long tournament held in the Supreme Court weekly between January and April. In the first three weeks of the competition, 22 to 26 mock trials were undertaken each week. Approximately 90 Judges from all courts, Village Magistrates, Law Clerks and Referees volunteered their time to judge the events every year. The program provided high school students with an opportunity to gain practical skills needed to work in a professional legal setting, introduced students to the ethics and responsibilities required in practicing law and enables individuals to apply their education while under the direct supervision of experienced staff.
- St. John's Law School, National Civil Rights Trial Competition. Over 200 students from 16 law schools across the country participated in the annual St. John's Law School National Civil Rights Trial Competition. Judges from all courts volunteered their time as moot court judges for several hours over the course of several days each year in the late fall. Approximately 80 attorneys served as evaluators. The competitions took place over two weekdays in courtroom space provided for the program in the Supreme Court building and in classrooms at St. John's Law School during the following weekend
- P.E.A.C.E. Program (Parent Education & Custody Effectiveness). The Nassau County Courts collaborate and host a PEACE (Parent Education and Custody Effectiveness) program which was held in the Supreme Court several times this per year. Since its founding in 1992, PEACE has served thousands of families across New York. It is a multi-disciplinary educational program designed to provide free information to parents about divorce and separation process with the goal of resulting in improved parent/child relationships in the reorganized family and reduction in the number of contested custody, visitation and support disputes that face the courts. Several Court Officers have been recognized for their extraordinary courtesy, kindness and sensitivity to the often emotionally charged participants as they provide security when the program is in progress.

Civic Outreach

- Problem Solving Courts. These courts create partnerships requiring intensive collaboration between court personnel and a multitude of diverse agencies and groups throughout the community. Many judicial and non-judicial personnel in the Nassau County Courts have met

the daunting challenge of planning, implementing and operating the many different problem solving courts opened in Nassau County. The problem solving courts in Nassau County which are currently operating include a Misdemeanor Drug Treatment Court in the District Court and a Felony Drug Treatment Court in the County Court that link addicted offenders to drug treatment instead of incarceration, three Domestic Violence Courts - two of which are located in the County Court (IDV, Felony DV) and one in the District Court (Misdemeanor DV), that emphasize victim safety and defendant accountability, and a Sex Offense Court that also emphasizes victim safety and defendant accountability. A Mental Health and Veterans component was recently added to our District Court and a new Adolescent Diversion Part became fully operational. The court now has a Human Trafficking part as well as dedicated DWI parts in both the County Court and District Courts.

- Nassau County Courts Children's Center. The Family Court Children's Center is located in the Nassau County Family Court. By contract with OCA, it is currently operated by North Shore Child & Family Guidance and provides a separate and supervised environment for more than 200 children per month while caretakers tend to Court business.
- Employee Blood Drives. In collaboration with the Long Island Blood Services, a division of New York Blood Center various employees of the Supreme Court, Family Court and the District Court organize and donate blood at regularly scheduled blood drives.
- The Nassau Adoption Day. The National County Family Court and Nassau County Department of Social Services, in partnership with the Long Island Children's Museum, participates yearly in National Adoption Day. The ceremony is hosted by the Long Island Children's Museum in Garden City, where the adoptions of children in foster care are finalized. Following the November 21st ceremony, a reception was held for families finalizing adoptions and families who have adopted during the year.
- Nassau Health Care Corporation. This initiative is scheduled twice a month. A mobile unit is stationed outside the courthouse which offers a mammography to all women 40 years of age and older, without any out-of-pocket expense. It is funded by the Nassau Health Care Corporation, and the New York State Department of Health, Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program. This initiative began in 1997 and has screened over 1000 women for breast cancer.
- Surrogate's Court Open House. The Nassau County Surrogate's Court hosted an open house for guardian *ad litem*s on February 25, 2016 at the courthouse in Mineola. About 75 people attended the meet and greet with newly elected Surrogate Margaret Reilly addressing questions and expectations.
- Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The Nassau County Judicial Committee on Women in the Courts hosted a series of informational meetings throughout courthouses in the District during the month of October 2016. A collaboration with the Safe Center LI, Inc., the theme "Stop Domestic Violence, Restoring Hope for Victims of Abuse" will include presentations regarding community resources, advocacy and programs available to address this critical societal concern.

Court Tours

- Numerous and various court tours including Cub Scouts and the Institute for the Learning in Retirement, a senior group based on the SUNY Farmingdale campus, conducted through District Court, County Court and Supreme Court tours throughout the year.
- Judicial and non-judicial staff made presentations to the Stratford Road Elementary School Community Reader Day, Locust Valley High School Career Day, North Shore Historical Museum Careers in Law Enforcement Workshop, Massapequa High School Law Day, Floral Park Girls Scouts, St Christopher's School, and a Medical Student Presentation at the courthouse.

Cultural Awareness

- Black History Month Recognition. The Courts in Nassau annually celebrate of Black History Month. A collaboration between the Amistad Long Island Black Bar Association and the Nassau County Courts Black History Committee, this year's ceremony held on February 26, 2016, marked the 11th annual event. Diversity and achievements in the workplace are also recognized through the recognition of dedicated and distinguished non-judicial employees.
- Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration. A celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month was held in the Supreme Court building on October 2016. **Court Information/ Help Center**
- Located in a newly redesigned area of the Supreme Court Public Access Law Library, the Center undertakes broad informational outreach to both attorneys and those individuals attempting to navigate the complex legal system without an attorney.
- Enhanced automation, centralization, and consolidation has resulted in the court absorbing a significant number of vacancies while maintaining and improving service to a growing population in need of vital information and assistance. Due to the efforts of the staff in the Court Information Center towards improving efficiency and the quality of the delivery of assistance, forms delivery and information through the internet have been integrated into services provided. The court is proud of the improvements in delivering forms and updated information and resources through the internet.

Mobile Legal Help Center

- As available, the Nassau County Courts have made available a Mobile Legal Help Center offering Nassau County residents legal assistance for a myriad of legal issues including: Housing, Public Benefits, Healthcare, Immigration, Family Law, Employment, Consumer Protection and Advance Planning. The Mobile Legal Help Center is a partnership between the New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG), a not-for-profit legal services provider, and the Access to Justice Program. The Mobile Legal Help Center initiative was established to assist residents of New York with low incomes who are in need of legal assistance and may not have access to a courthouse. The Mobile Center serves as a fully functioning legal services office with a team of attorneys present to provide legal assistance with a wide array of civil legal issues. The center also includes separate meeting areas to ensure clients' privacy.

10th Judicial District Suffolk County

Educational Outreach

- PEACE (Parent Education & Custody Effectiveness). Parent Education is a program to help parents who are going through court proceedings involving divorce, separation, and custody/visitation issues to learn about the court system, the process, and the effects on their children. The PEACE Program educates parents about the impact a separation or divorce may have on children. Sessions are held at Touro Law School under the direction of the Supervising Judge of the Matrimonial Courts.
- Landlord-Tenant Pro Bono Program. In conjunction with Nassau Suffolk Law Services and the Suffolk County Courts, Touro Law School operates a program in which first year law students assist attorneys in landlord tenant matters. The students interview clients and prepare the case which allows staff attorneys to concentrate on litigation.
- Uncontested Matrimonial Program. In this collaborative program between the Suffolk County Courts, Nassau Suffolk Law Services and Touro Law School, first year law students, working under the leadership of a staff attorney at Touro Law School, help litigants navigate uncontested matrimonial proceedings. Coordinating as a community to better serve the public, individuals on the Nassau Suffolk Law Services Pro Bono Divorce Program waiting

list who are seeking an uncontested divorce are alternatively assisted by Touro Law School. Law students interview the litigants, who remain pro se, and assist in preparing all required paperwork. This is the 5th year of the program with approximately 60 individuals served this year. Volunteer Intern Program. This program for law and college students operates during the summer months and on a more limited basis during the academic year. The 2016 Summer Internship Program accommodated 60 students with placements throughout the court system. Students were invited to participate in various field trips including tours of the Supreme, Family and District Courts, as well as to the Suffolk County Crime Lab and Medical Examiner's Office. From January 2016 through August of 2016, 98 student interns have been placed within the Suffolk County Courts.

- Mock Trials. Mock Trials for Touro Law School students were hosted by the Suffolk County Courts in Central Islip on several dates in the Spring. An additional three dates were held in November 2016.
- Law School Collaborations. Outreach Coordinator visited Touro Law School in February 2016 to promote careers and internship opportunities in the court system. Literature was distributed about careers and internship opportunities in the court system.

Law Day

- A Law Day program entitled "The State of Guardianship in Suffolk County" was held on May 8, 2016. The event was attended by judges, senior court personnel and attorneys specializing in the practice of Elder Law. The program demonstrated both the interest and expertise among professionals to ensure this vulnerable population is well served.

Civic Outreach

- Children's Center. The Suffolk County Judicial Committee on Women in the Courts, together with the Educational Assistance Corporation, has collaborated to ensure the Children's Center in the Cohalan Court Complex remains open for litigants with children. From January through August of 2016, 1187 children and 804 families were served by the program. An average of 7 children a day are supervised by trained staff while parents attend to court business.
- Breast and Prostate Cancer Awareness. The Suffolk County Women's Bar Association, with the assistance of the Suffolk County Judicial Committee on Women in the Courts, hosted the annual Mobile Mammography program on October 7, 2016 at the Cohalan Court Complex. The Scan Van of Project Renewal was available to conduct free mammograms to women 40 and older. To date, over 30 members of the public registered to participate. Flyers were on display at the Children's Center at Cohalan Court, the Library Resources for the Public Program, the Child Support Office as well as other locations throughout the Cohalan Court Complex. Literature was distributed to the public about breast and prostate cancer awareness on September 28, 2016 at the Cohalan Court Complex in Central Islip and on October 11, 2016 at the County Court Complex in Riverhead.
- Women's History Month. A program entitled "Forming a More Perfect Union: Celebrating Women in Government and Public Service" was held on March 18, 2016 in recognition of Women's History Month. The program, sponsored by the Suffolk County Judicial Committee on Women in the Courts and District Administrative Judge C. Randall Hinrichs, honored women who have shaped their communities through public service and government leadership. The program recognized local high school students who participated in the featured essay contest and two exceptional court employees. Essay contest winners received college scholarships from local bar associations, and were invited to shadow a Suffolk County Judge and participate in a court tour in June of 2016.
- Heart Health Awareness. The Suffolk County Judicial Committee on Women in the Courts coordinated free health screenings in 2016. On February 1, 2016, Southampton Hospital

came to Arthur M. Cromarty Court Complex in Riverhead to provide blood pressure screening and simple cholesterol testing. On February 10, 2016, the St. Francis Mobile Community Outreach Bus provided free screenings at the Cohalan Court Complex in Central Islip including a brief cardiac history, blood test for cholesterol and diabetes with appropriate patient education and referrals as needed for clients above the age of 18 years old. Court employees and outside partner volunteers conducted outreach to members of the public in February to coincide with Heart Health Awareness.

- Domestic Violence Awareness. On October 7, 2016, a program entitled “Technology and Domestic Violence” was held at the Cohalan Court Complex. A detective from the Suffolk County Police Department and an Acting County Court Judge, discussed tactics of abuse and stalking through the misuses of technology, with an explanation of availability and execution as well as methods of protection and prevention.
- Domestic Violence Advocate Assisted Petition Program. The Domestic Violence Advocate Assisted Petition Program was specifically designed for domestic violence advocates to assist litigants in completing and filing Family Offense petitions with the Family Court. The program allows domestic violence advocate groups to create legally sufficient Family Offense petitions for a victim of domestic violence. The information collected in the program is directly transferred into the Family Court’s case management system. Court personnel can easily review the information and docket the case upon being handed the hard copy petition. This process streamlines the overall court experience for the petitioner/domestic violence victim while providing domestic violence advocates the flexibility of accessing the program and aiding victims from any internet accessible location.
- Foreclosure Conference Part. To assist litigants facing mortgage foreclosure action, efforts are made to ensure homeowners have access to legal service providers. Each defendant receives information in the mail prior to their scheduled conference date outlining information about the conference, as well as a list of service providers that provide free representation during the conference process. Nassau Suffolk Law Services, Inc., Touro Law Center, Long Island Housing Services, Inc. and the Suffolk County Bar Pro Bono Foundation’s Foreclosure Project, in addition to other providers, are present in the Foreclosure Conference Part each week to provide assistance to those who meet eligibility guidelines. Attorneys from the various agencies have access to a private conference room in Supreme Court in which to confer with their clients.
- Litigants with Diverse Needs. Pursuant to the Charitable Bail Act of 2012 which allows certified nonprofit organizations to post bail for individuals who cannot afford to post bail themselves, efforts are under way to provide this service in Suffolk County. Economic Opportunity Council (EOC) of Suffolk will fund the charitable bail and work closely with the Legal Aid Society of Suffolk County and the indigent defense bar. EOC has now received the appropriate licenses and will begin implementing the fund within the next few months. Screening devices and procedures for program operations will be finalized this year. Technical support for this project will be provide by the Bronx Defenders Charitable Bail Fund.

Court Tours

- The District Administrative Judge’s Office organized and scheduled approximately 30 court tours on behalf of middle and high school students from public and private institutions in Suffolk County. Approximately 400 students attended tours this year. Age appropriate hand outs were provided during the tours to enhance the students’ education experience. Students were guided through the Cohalan Court Complex in Central Islip and visited the Arraignment Part.

Cultural Awareness

- Black History Month. A program was sponsored by the District Administrative Judge, in collaboration with Amistad Long Island Black Bar Association and the Suffolk County Bar Association, to celebrate Black History Month on February 11, 2016.
- The program, entitled “Hallowed Grounds: Sites of African American Memories,” was attended by over 150 judicial and non-judicial court personnel, members of the public and local attorneys.
- The second annual Hon. Marquette L. Floyd Achievement Award, in recognition of the first African-American Judge in Suffolk County, was presented to the Honorable William G. Ford, Supreme Court Justice of New York State.
- Material was on display throughout the month of February 2016 in the public area of the Cohalan Court Complex showcasing the history and achievements of the African-American community.
- Hispanic Heritage Month. A Hispanic Heritage Celebration, sponsored by District Administrative Judge, in collaboration with the Long Island Hispanic Bar Association, was held at the Cohalan Court Complex on October 13, 2016. Food representing the Hispanic culture was served following the program.
- Cultural displays of artwork and history was on display in the public hallways of the Cohalan Court Complex during Hispanic Heritage Month.

Court Help Center

- DIY (Do It Yourself) Program. The DIY Help Centers in Family Court provide litigants with a comfortable, semi-private work station in close proximity to the General Clerk’s Office where DIY Forms Program is readily accessible. DIY Forms easily guide users through a series of questions and information sheets based upon the litigant’s responses. Using these well-designed programs litigants and members of the public are provided with easy access to information about court proceedings and are able to retrieve necessary information.
- Lawyer Referral Information Service. In collaboration with the Suffolk County Bar Association, signs have been placed throughout the Suffolk County Courts to advise litigants of their Lawyer Referral Information Service. The information is written in both English and Spanish.
- Library Resources for the Public Program. In both Central Islip and Riverhead court complexes, the law libraries house a Library Resources for the Public Program (LRPP) in which program representatives provide users with information about various proceedings and available resources. From January 2016 – August 2016, court personnel assigned to the LRPP have assisted 4,345 litigants in person and fielded 1,432 phone calls and 66 emails. Non-English speaking litigants have the option of speaking to a bilingual representative or using the Language Line to ensure complete understanding of the information disseminated.
- Deputy Chief Clerk of Suffolk County Family Court received the Access to Justice Program’s DIY Star Award in recognition of her efforts to provide access to justice to unrepresented litigants in Suffolk County.
- Post-Foreclosure Presentation: As part of the Access to Justice Program’s Pro Bono Week celebration, a staff member presented “What Happens after Foreclosure” at the Cohalan Court Complex in Central Islip. The event was held October. This free program for the public focused on unrepresented litigants facing foreclosure. The presentation provided attendees with information about what to expect and procedural steps taken after the judgment of foreclosure has been signed. Sample forms were made available during the presentation.

Professional Organizations

- Suffolk County Bar Association – Pro Bono Foundation. The District Administrative Judge's Office has, historically, been represented by a standing member on the Pro Bono Foundation. The Foundation strives to ensure that everyone, no matter their means, receives the highest level of professional representation. The presence of a court representative on the Board of Managers allows for a free exchange of information from those in the best position to provide it, as to the status of pro bono efforts throughout the County.
- Touro Law School's Public Advocacy Center: The Suffolk County District Administrative Judge's Office is represented at Touro Law School's Public Advocacy Center quarterly meetings. The Center, which encompasses representatives from many public advocacy agencies, strives to streamline service delivery and increase access to legal services for Suffolk County residents.

APPENDIX G: PLAIN LANGUAGE GAL APPOINTMENT ORDER

CIVIL COURT OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
 COUNTY OF _____: HOUSING PART ____

Petitioner,

- against -

Respondent

Index No. L&T: _____

**ORDER APPOINTING
 GUARDIAN AD LITEM (GAL)**

Upon reading and filing the Order to Show Cause, dated the ___ day of _____, _____ and upon the affirmation (and memorandum of law) of _____ Esq., dated the ___ day of _____, _____, whereby it appears that, _____, the Respondent/Petitioner, is incapable of adequately defending or prosecuting his/her rights, the Court hereby determines that the appointment of a Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) is proper and necessary to protect the rights of the Respondent/Petitioner herein.

or

The Court acting sua sponte pursuant to CPLR Rule 1202 and it appearing that the Respondent/Petitioner, _____, is incapable of adequately defending or prosecuting his/her rights, it is hereby determined that the appointment of a Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) is proper and necessary to protect the rights of the Respondent/Petitioner.

Accordingly, it is **ORDERED**, that _____, telephone number _____, is hereby appointed GAL in this proceeding, upon filing a written consent and affidavit as required by CPLR §1204(c), and it is further **ORDERED**, that pursuant to CPLR §1204, the GAL appointed herein shall file an affidavit showing the services rendered; and it is further (**check all that apply**):

ORDERED, that upon consent the Department of Social Services of the City of New York shall pay _____ the sum of \$600.00 upon receipt of a copy of the affidavit of services filed with the Court pursuant to CPLR §1204, for services rendered herein as GAL; and it is further

ORDERED, that the judgment and warrant herein are vacated; and it is further

ORDERED, that all stays remain in effect; and it is further

ORDERED, _____

DATED: _____, New York

 HON.

CIV-GP-112 (revised May, 2011)

2011 Prior GAL Appointment Order

ORDER APPOINTING GUARDIAN AD LITEM (GAL)

THE COURT FINDS

1. A motion to appoint a Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) for the litigant was made by the Petitioner Respondent Court.
2. A hearing was held.
3. The Court finds that (going forward referred to as "named litigant") is not able to effectively defend his or her rights and protect his or her interests.

THE COURT ORDERS

4. Name of GAL

Telephone number of GAL

is appointed Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) for in this case for the purposes stated in 7-10 below.
5. The GAL is directed to file written Consent and an Affidavit with the Court (CPLR sec. 1204).
6. The GAL's appointment does not end until all terms of any settlement reached are completed, all referrals to DSS or other social or charitable services are followed up on, and all steps needed to make sure that the named litigant is able to follow through with the Court's final order are taken. The Court may terminate the GAL's appointment sooner.
7. The GAL must make all efforts to meet with the named litigant in his or her home. Alternatively, the GAL must make all efforts to meet the named litigant in Court or in a safe environment if the named litigant cannot come to Court. The GAL will speak to the named litigant to find out what he or she wants in this case.
8. The GAL must investigate and bring to the Court's attention all facts important to the named litigant's case.
9. The GAL must see if the named litigant qualifies for any social services that can help resolve this case. If so, the GAL should follow-up on getting the named services.
10. The GAL must recommend to the Court a final outcome to the case that is in the best interests of the named litigant. The GAL must tell the Court how the named litigant feels about the GAL's recommendation.

PAYMENT OF FEES

11. If the named litigant is or becomes a client of Adult Protective Services (APS) during the course of this proceeding the New York City Human Resources Administration/Department of Social Services shall pay the GAL, upon consent, the sum of \$750 following the receipt of a copy of the Affidavit of Services filed by the GAL in Court (CPLR sec. 1204) and any other required documents listed here:

<http://nycourts.gov/courts/nyc/housing/GALexisting.shtml#payment>

12. The GAL agrees to perform his or her duties in this case at no cost. If the named litigant subsequently becomes a client of APS during this proceeding, 11 applies.

NOTICE AND INFORMATION

13. The named litigant was given a copy of this Order in Court.
 - The named litigant was mailed a copy of this Order by the Court.
 - GAL is directed to give a copy of this Order to the named litigant.
14. The GAL should provide a copy of the brochure: "The Judge says I need a Guardian ad Litem (GAL). What does that mean?" to the named litigant found at:
<http://nycourts.gov/courts/nyc/housing/GALexisting.shtml#brochures>

THE COURT ORDERS

- That the judgment and warrant of eviction in this case are vacated (cancelled).
- That all stays stopping something in this case are continued.
- That

Dated:

, New York

Hon.

APPENDIX H: LETTER FROM NEPAL DELEGATION

Sent: Thursday, May 19, 2016 3:33 AM
To: QUESTION <QUESTION@nycourts.gov>
Subject: Supreme Court Nepal visit in US

Honorable Judge Fern A. Fisher,

First of all, greetings from Nepal. Hope all is fine with you. I am Ratna Shrestha, Justice Sector Coordinator of Rule of Law and Human Rights Program (ROLHR) at UNDP, Nepal. Just to remind you, I was one of the member of the visiting delegates from Supreme Court of Nepal last year in March 2015.

I am very much pleased to write you back with some concrete achievement from the learning of the US visit. One of the remarkable achievements is the establishment of Access to Justice Commission (A2J Commission) in Nepal, which is absolutely learning of the visit and replication in our country. Right Honorable Chief Justice Kalyan Shrestha made an executive decision to constitute A2J Commission in July 2015 in order to enhancing access to justice to the women, poor and marginalized groups, which is appreciated from all the sector. Now, strengthening this newly established commission is a major concern.

For your kind information, now we have a new Chief Justice Right Honorable Ms. Sushila Karki, the first women Chief justice ever in the judicial history in Nepal. Increasing women representation in judiciary and ensuring access to justice is one of her prime agenda, among others. Therefore, strengthening A2J Commission is one of her priorities. In this context, the Right Honorable Chief Justice has suggested ROLHR/UNDP to support organizing a study visit to the Supreme Court and other courts of appropriate and possible states of the USA to further learn about the access to justice commission in order to strengthening the newly established A2J Commission in Nepal, which is a great hope for many justice seekers. From the last years' experience, Arizona, Washington DC and New York were the inspiring states for this purpose.

Needless to say that the delegates were very much delighted with the meeting with you and the NY courts in terms of learning about access to justice last year. Following to that visit, the ROLHR/UNDP is again organizing another study visit to the delegates from Nepalese judiciary that includes the member of the A2J Commission as well, which is planned from 30th may to 10th June 2016 in US and Canada. The team is supposed to arrive in NY on 1 June and flying to Arizona on 2 June. **Therefore, may I request you for your time to meet with the delegates on any time of the first half of the 2 June.** This might be a short notice for you, however, this is only the available time due to other agenda. We have developed a concept note and possible agenda for this study visit, which I am happy to share in details upon your response. I would be really appreciating for your earlier and positive response.

The Right Honorable Chief Justice, along with some other women judges are participating in the International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ) Conference to be held from 25-30 May 2016 in Washington DC, USA. Perhaps you may meet them in DC, if you are also participating on that conference. The other delegates coming for the A2J study visit will join with the Chief Justice on 30 May for the rest of the agenda.

Thanks a lot in advance and best regards,

Ratna K. Shrestha

Justice Sector Coordinator

Strengthening the Rule of Law and Human

Rights Protection System in Nepal (RoLHR)

Sanepa-2, Lalitpur

Phone no:- +977-1-5552340, 5552339, Extn:-230

Mobile No. 977-9851104192

PARTNERS, FRIENDS & VOLUNTEERS

The Access to Justice Program could not possibly reach as many New Yorkers in need of assistance without the help of our many partners, friends and volunteers outside the court system. Below is a list of the individuals, agencies, nonprofit organizations, charitable organizations, government offices, *pro bono* organizations, bar associations, law firms, corporations, law schools, social work schools, and colleges throughout New York State that generously offer their services to the New York State Courts and the Access to Justice Program in an effort to increase access to justice for unrepresented litigants. This list would be endless if it included the numerous court employees who continuously commit their time and energy to bolster our efforts. The Access to Justice Program is grateful for the assistance.

PARTNERS AND FRIENDS

Addison, Quisquella, Esq., Pro Bono
Net, LawHelpNY Program Director
Albany County Bar Association Pro
Bono Program
Alston & Bird, LLP
American Bar Association Standing
Committee on Pro Bono and Public
Service
American Bar Foundation
Amistad Long Island Black Bar
Association
Arent Fox LLP
Bank of America
Bar Association of Erie County
Volunteer Lawyers Project (VLP)
Barberio, Gary, Director of Community
Affairs, NYC Human Resources
Administration, Adult Protective
Services
Barclays
Bath Central School District
Belzaguy, Ernesto, Esq.
Big Brothers and Big Sisters of
Rockland County
Blank Rome LLP
BNP Paribas
Bond, Schoeneck & King PLLC
BOOM!Health
Brighter Tomorrows, Inc.
Bronx CLARO Program

Bronx County Bar Association
Bronx Legal Services
Bronx Overall Economic Development
Corporation
Brooklyn Bar Association Volunteer
Lawyers Project
Brooklyn Defender Services
Brooklyn Law School
Brooklyn Legal Services, Inc.
Bryant & Stratton College
Buffalo Public Schools
Bushwick Housing and Legal Assistance
Program
Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft, LLP
CALI (The Center for Computer-
Assisted Legal Instruction)
Capital District Women's Bar
Association Legal Project, Inc.
CASA of Rockland County (Court
Appointed Special Advocates)
Casey Family Programs
Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New
York
Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New
York, Homebase Homelessness
Prevention Program
Catholic Family Services
Catholic Migration Services
Center for Safety and Change
Chadbourne & Parke LLP

Charlotte School of Law
Cherubin, Sidney, Esq., Director of
Legal Services, Brooklyn Volunteer
Lawyers Project
Chicago-Kent College of Law Illinois
Institute of Technology Center for
Access to Justice & Technology
Children's Law Center (CLC)
Child Care Resources of Rockland, Inc.
City Bar Justice Center
Citigroup
City of Rochester Corporation Counsel
City of Rochester Summer Youth
Employment Program and Youth Law
Prep Program
CLARO NYC
Colgate-Palmolive
Columbia Law School
Cooley, LLP
Cornell Cooperative Extension RAPP
Program
Cornell Law School
Crime Victims Legal Network Project
Advisory Committee
CSEDNY Batterer's Intervention
Program
CUNY School of Law
CUNY School of Law Community Legal
Resource Network (CLRN)
Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP
Debevoise & Plimpton LLP
Dechert LLP
Denerstein, Evan, Esq., MFY Legal
Services, Inc.
De Mel, Niki, Pro Bono and Special
Initiatives Coordinator, Pro Bono Net
Disability Rights New York
Dispute Resolution Center of Putnam
County
DLA Piper LLP
Dressler, Jordan M., Esq., City of New
York, Human Resources
Administration, Office of Civil Justice
Duane Morris LLP
Dutchess County Bar Association

Dutchess County Department of
Probation
Dutchess County Mediation Services
Dutchess County Public Defender's
Office
EAC Network
Elder Care Solutions
Empire Justice Center
Erie County Legal Aid
Family & Children's Association
Feerick Center for Social Justice,
Fordham University School of Law
Fordham University School of Law
Goldis, Glenna, Esq., Coordinating
Attorney, Volunteer Lawyer for the Day,
Brooklyn Volunteer Lawyers Project
Goodridge, Leah, Supervising Attorney,
MFY Legal Services, Inc.
Grace Smith House, Inc.
Green, Marshall W., Esq., The Legal Aid
Society, Bronx Neighborhood Office
Greenberg Traurig LLP
Guthrie, Clinton, Esq., The Legal Aid
Society, Brooklyn Neighborhood
Office, Housing Unit
Hassler, Theresa E., Esq., Director of
Research, Policy & Planning, Office of
the *Pro Se* Clerk, OATH
Heller, Meredith S., Esq., New York City
Bar Association
Hempstead Hispanic Civic Association
Herkimer County Dept. Of Social
Services, Probation and PINS
Diversion Program
Hiscock & Barclay
Historical Society of the New York
Courts
Hoekelman Center University of
Rochester Medical Center
Hofstra University
Hogan Lovells
Holzman, Chloe, Esq., Mental Health
Law Project, MFY Legal Services, Inc.
Housing Court Answers, Inc.
HSBC Securities (USA) Inc
Hudson River Housing, Inc.

Hughes Hubbard & Reed LLP
 Ibero-American Action League, Inc.
 Immigration Equality
 JASA
 JP Morgan Chase Bank, N.A.,
 Justice Studies Center of the Americas
 Kalman, Marlene, Esq.
 Kaye Scholer LLP
 Khan, Shafaq, Esq. Mental Health Law
 Project, MFY Legal Services, Inc.
 Kirkland Ellis LLP
 Kramer Levin Naftalis & Frankel LLP
 Kroub, Silbersher & Kolmykov PLLC
 Lachter, Katie M, Esq., Associate
 General Counsel, Proskauer, Rose
 LLP
 Lavelle & Finn, LLP
 LawHelpNY
 Leadership of Cortland
 Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo
 Legal Aid, Children's Rights Society
 Orange County Team
 Legal Aid Society, the Bronx
 Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New
 York, Inc.
 Legal Aid Society of Rockland County,
 Inc.
 Legal Assistance of Western New York,
 Inc.
 Legal Assistance of Western New York,
 Inc., Bath Office, Southern Tier Legal
 Services
 Legal Assistance of Western New York,
 Inc., Elmira Office, Chemung County
 Neighborhood Legal Services
 Legal Assistance of Western New York,
 Inc., Geneva Office
 Legal Assistance of Western New York,
 Inc., Ithaca Office, Tompkins/Tioga
 Neighborhood Legal Services
 Legal Assistance Western New York,
 Inc., Jamestown Office, Southern Tier
 Legal Services
 Legal Assistance of Western New York,
 Inc., Olean Office, Southern Tier Legal
 Services
 Legal Assistance of Western New York,
 Inc., Rochester Office, Monroe County
 Legal Assistance Center
 Legal Services for the Elderly, Disabled
 or Disadvantaged of WNY, Inc.
 Legal Services of the Hudson Valley
 Legal Services of Hudson Valley, Safe
 Home of Orange County
 Legal Services NYC
 Lenox Hill Neighborhood House
 Lewis County Public Defender Program
 LIFT
 Life is Priceless Foundation
 Lok, Deirdre, Assistance Director and
 General Counsel, The Harriet and
 Jeanette Weinberg Center for Elder
 Abuse and Prevention at the Hebrew
 Home at Riverdale
 L.I. Against Domestic Violence
 Long Island Crisis Center
 Long Island Hispanic Bar Association
 Long Island Housing Services, Inc.
Manhattan CLARO Program
 Manhattan Legal Services
 Maryland Courts Access to Justice
 Department
 Maurice A. Deane School of Law at
 Hofstra University
 MCC Monroe Community College
 McCarter & English
 Mckinsey & Company
 Medgar Evers College
 Mental Health Association of Rockland
 County
 Mercy Center Legal Advice Program
 MFY Legal Services, Inc.
 Mid-Hudson Women's Bar Association
 Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and
 Popeo, P.C.
 Mobile Legal Help Center Replication
 Project – North Country

Mobile Legal Help Center Replication Project – Southern Tier
 Mobile Legal Help Center Replication Project – Western New York
 Monroe County District Attorney’s Office
 Monroe County Probation Department
 Monroe County Public Defender’s Office
 Monroe County Sheriff’s Department
 Morgan, Lewis & Bockius, LLP
 Morgan Stanley
 Morrison Foerster LLP
 My Sister’s Place
 Nash, Kevin, Rosenblum & Bianco LLP
 Nassau Community College Pre-Law Students Association
 Nassau County Bar Association
 Nassau County Coalition Against Domestic Violence
 Nassau/Suffolk Law Services Committee, Inc.
 Nassau University Medical Center, Mobile Crisis Unit
 National Homeowner-Landlord Association
 Neighborhood Association for Intercultural Affairs (NAICA)
 Neighborhood Legal Services, Inc.
 New York City Bar Association
 New York City Housing Authority
 New York County Lawyers’ Association (NYCLA)
New York Law School
 New York State Bar Association
 New York State Division of Human Rights
 New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA)
 New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA), Legal Services Initiative
 New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS)
 New York State Office of Children and Family Services
 New York State Police Troop F
 New York University School of Law
 Niagara County Legal Aid Society, a Division of Neighborhood Legal Services, Inc.
 Ninth Judicial District Pro Bono Legal Action Committee
 Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation (NMIC)
 Norton Rose Fulbright US LLP
 NYC Civilian Complaint Review Board
 NYC Department for the Aging
 NYC Department of Consumer Affairs
 NYC Department of Parks & Recreation
 NYC Human Resources Administration, Adult Protective Services
 NYC Human Resources Administration, Office of Legal Affairs
 NYC Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence, Family Justice Center
 NYLAG (New York Legal Assistance Group)
 NYLAG (New York Legal Assistance Group) LGBTQ Law Project
 Oneida County Bar Association
 Oneida County BOCES Internship Program
 Onondaga County Bar Association
 Onondaga County Parent Support Program
 Orange County Bar Association
 Orange County Sheriff’s Office
 Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP
 Oswego County Bar Association
 Pace Women’s Justice Center
 Partnership for Children’s Rights
 Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler LLP
 Paul Hastings LLP
 Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP
 Pepper Hamilton, LLP
 Permanent Commission on Access to Justice
 Petts, Jonathan, Upsolve
 Pfizer Inc.
 Pluviose, Wedly, Director, Rental Assistance Unit, FIA Housing &

Homeless Services/Initiatives, NYC
Human Resources Administration
Prisoners' Legal Services of New York
Pro Bono Net
Pro Bono Partnership
Proskauer Rose LLP
Poder 97.1 FM, El Poder Latino de
Rochester
Public Utility Law Project of New York,
Inc.
Putnam County Department of
Probation
Putnam County Family and Community
Services
Putnam County Legal Aid Society, Inc.
Putnam County Mental Health Services
Putnam County Sheriff's Department
Putnam County District Attorney's Office
Putnam/Northern Westchester Women's
Resource Center
Queens Center for Gay Seniors
Queens Legal Services
Queens Volunteer Lawyers Project, Inc.
Reed Smith LLP
Regeneron Pharmaceuticals
Renaissance Economic Development
Corporation
Retired and Senior Volunteer Program
of Rockland County (RSVP)
Rochester City School District
Rochester Public Library
Rockland County Attorney's Office
Family Law Division
Rockland County Bar Association
Rockland County Department of Mental
Health
Rockland County Department of Social
Services
Rockland County Department of Social
Services Child Support Enforcement
Unit
Rockland County District Attorney
Rockland County Department of
Probation
Rockland County Sheriff

Rockland County Women's Bar
Association
Ropes & Gray LLP
Rosenblum, Josh B., Esq., Rosenblum
& Bianco LLP
Rosenthal, Sarah, Esq., NYLAG
Consumer Protection Unit
Safe Horizon
Safe Passage Project
Sanctuary for Families
S.A.N.E. (Sexual Assault Nurse
Examiner Program)
Schoenthal, Allison J., Esq., Hogan
Lovells
Seidman, Douglass J., Manhattan
Courthouse Project, The Legal Aid
Society
Self-Represented Litigation Network
Seneca Waterways Council Boy Scouts
Law Explorers
Shearman & Sterling LLP
Shrestha, Ratna K., Justice Sector
Coordinator, Strengthening the Rule of
Law and Human Rights Protection
System in Nepal, United Nations
Development Programme
Siena College Internship Program
Silvestre, Ygnacio, Director, Assigned
Counsel Project, NYC Department for
the Aging
S.I. Newhouse School of Public
Communications
Simpson, Thacher & Bartlett
Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom
LLP & Affiliates
Solomon, Joy, Director and Managing
Attorney, The Harry and Jeannette
Weinberg Center for Elder Abuse
Prevention, at the Hebrew Home at
Riverdale
Southern Westchester BOCES
St. John's University School of Law
St. Vincent de Paul Legal Program, Inc.
Consumer Justice for the Elderly

Litigation Clinic, St. John's University
School of Law
Starrer, Anne, Esq.
Staten Island CLARO Program
Staten Island Legal Services
Stroock & Stroock & Lavan LLP
Student Advocacy
Standard Chartered Bank
St. Peter's Episcopal Church Ministries,
Legal Eagles
Suffolk County Bar Association
Suffolk County Bar Association Pro
Bono Foundation
Suffolk County Bar Association Pro
Bono Foundation Foreclosure
Settlement Project
Suffolk County Department of Social
Services Guardianship Project
Suffolk County Sheriff's Office Domestic
Violence Unit
Suffolk County Women's Bar
Association
Sullivan & Cromwell
SUNY Geneseo
SUNY Oswego Internship Program
Susan B. Anthony House
Syracuse University College of Law
Syracuse University Maxwell School of
Citizenship and Public Affairs
Tallarico, Shanna, Esq., New York Legal
Assistance Group
*Tenant Protection Unit, Division of
Housing & Community Renewal*
Thompson Hine LLP
The Center for Computer-Assisted Legal
Instruction (CALI)
The American Legion Boys State
The City College of New York, Skadden
Arps Honors Program in Legal Studies
The Economic Opportunity Council of
Suffolk
The Harry and Jeannette Weinberg
Center for Elder Abuse Prevention at
the Hebrew Home at Riverdale
The Interfaith Center of New York

The Legal Aid Society of Mid-New York,
Inc.,
The Legal Aid Society of New York City
The Legal Aid Society of Rochester
The Norman Howard School
The Retreat, Inc.
The Safe Center LI
The Urban League
Tompkins-Seneca-Tioga BOCES
Touro College Jacob D. Fuchsberg Law
Center
Town of Haverstraw Police Department
Town of Orangetown Police Department
Town of Ramapo Police Department
Town of Stony Point Police Department
UBS Wealth Management Americas
Ugbode, Munonyedi, Esq., The Legal
Aid Society, Harlem Community Law
Office
University at Buffalo School of Law
University of Rochester
University Settlement
Upsolve
Urban Justice Center
Urban Justice Center – Community
Development Project
Urban Justice Center – Domestic
Violence Project
Urban Justice Center – Human Rights
Project
Urban Justice Center – International
Refugee Assistance Project
Urban Justice Center – Mental Health
Project
Urban Justice Center – Peter Cicchino
Youth Project
Urban Justice Center – Safety Net
Project
Urban Justice Center – Sex Workers
Project
Urban Justice Center – Street Vendors
Project
Urban League of Westchester County
Victims Information Bureau of Suffolk,
Inc. (VIBS)
Village of Piermont Police Department

Village of South Nyack Police
Department
Village of Spring Valley Police
Department
Village of Suffern Police Department
Volunteer Counseling Services, Inc.
Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts
Volunteer Lawyers Project of Onondaga
County, Inc.
Volunteer Legal Services Project of
Monroe County, Inc.
Volunteers of Legal Services
Watson Farley & Williams LLP
Weil, Gotshal & Manges
Weliky, Mark, Executive Director,
Queens Volunteer Lawyers Project,
Inc.
Westchester County Attorney's Office
Westchester County Bar Association
Westchester County Department of
Community Mental Health
Westchester County Probation
Department
Westchester County Department of
Social Service
Westchester County District Attorney's
Office
Westchester Women's Bar Association
Western New York Law Center
White & Case LLP
Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP
Willow Domestic Violence Center
Women's Bar Association of Orange &
Sullivan Counties
WXXI, National Public Radio
Worker Justice Center of New York
Wright, Garrett, Supervising Attorney,
Community Development Project,
Urban Justice Center
Yasek, John, Esq.
YMCA of Rockland County Courthouse
Children's Center
YWCA Orange County

VOLUNTEERS

This Report sets forth the numerous ways in which the Access to Justice Program is working toward 100% meaningful access to justice for all. In many cases, our efforts would be futile without the contribution, skill and dedication of the individuals who generously volunteer their time to serve thousands of *pro se* litigants who would otherwise be unrepresented in the courts. While many of the Partners and Friends enumerated in the previous section allow the Access to Justice Program to operate its court-based volunteer programs, there would be no programs to operate without these volunteers. In recognition of their service, listed below are the names of the 2016 Access to Justice Program's stellar volunteers, divided by level of contribution. All of the individuals listed below were previously recognized during National Pro Bono Celebration Week (see Part VIII: Recognition). The Access to Justice Program is grateful for their ongoing support and service.

The Access to Justice Program's Star volunteer of the year, recognized for his three years of continuous weekly service in the Volunteer Lawyer For the Day Program in the New York County Civil Court:

William Brick, Esq.

The following outstanding volunteers provided the most volunteer hours in the programs they participated in:

Guardian Ad Litem Program

Thomas Jeffrey Giles
Stuart C. Adler, Esq.

Family Court Volunteer Attorney Program

Barbara R. Mendelson, Esq.
Mary C. Pennisi, Esq.

Uncontested Divorce Program

Maria La Macchia, Esq.
Mahbubar Talukdar, Esq.

Consumer Debt Volunteer Lawyer for the Day Programs

Thomas Joseph Mennecke, Esq.

Civil Court Volunteer Lawyer Program

Stella Hirsch, Esq.

Housing Volunteer Lawyer Program

Ann Elizabeth Lewis, Esq.
Vania Ming Tseng, Esq.

Housing Volunteer Lawyer for the Day Program

Crystal A. Jackson, Esq.
Rina F. Lieberman, Esq.

Consumer Debt Volunteer Lawyer for the Day Program

William Richards, Esq.
Stella Hirsch, Esq.

Court Navigator Program

VeNita LaNier
Yscary Rodriguez

The following distinguished individuals volunteered substantially in excess of their required pro bono commitment:

Edward Acton, Esq.
Emily Allen
Alina Avaliani
Ernesto Belzaguy, Esq.
Randel Bueno
Mary Callaghan, Esq.
Jose Caraballo
Brook Carrillo
Della DeKay, Esq.
Nicola DeMarco
Brett Dolin, Esq.
Paldon Dolma
Phillip Dunn
Ava Ferenci
Rudy Ferreira
Sheldon Fried, Esq.
Shani Friedman
Barbara Gager
Katrina Glover
Betty Ware Hayes
Tranesa Houston
Nelly Isaacson
Julema Laforce
Richard Landman, Esq.
Juanita Lasprilla, Esq.
Jesse Levine, Esq.
Efraim Lipschutz
Charese Magwood

Howard Malatzky, Esq.
Tom McCarthy
James Melendez
Devora Nunez
Mosunmola Ojo, Esq.
David Oppliger, Esq.
Wanda Ortiz
Jamila Outlar
David Patterson, Esq.
Veronica Paul
Robert Peters, Esq.
Joseph Primavera, Esq.
Trishawn Raffington
Laura Del Regno
Jorge Rodriguez Ruiz
Carl Schwartz
Shabana Shahabuddin, Esq.
Sophia Singh
George Sole
Syeda Tasmin, Esq.
Renata Thakurdyal
Michael Valentine, Esq.
Andres Valles, Esq.
Natalia Varela, Esq.
Priscilla Vidal
Brian Wallace
Isabelle D. Wedemeyer, Esq.
Bart Wu, Esq.

The following individuals donated 50 hours or more in Access to Justice Program's volunteer programs:

Judith Aisen, Esq.
Regina Alberty, Esq.
Ana Almeida-Halassa, Esq.
Sam Amar, Esq.
Stanley Amelkin, Esq.
Agatha Archibong, Esq.
Grace Avedissian, Esq.
Yifang Bai
Percival Bailey, Esq.
Daniel Bannen, Esq.

Timothy Baron
David Barres, Esq.
Jennifer Bergenfield, Esq.
John Bonanno, Esq.
Aaron Buchman, Esq.
Carole Burns, Esq.
Margaret E. Cammer, Esq.
Josie Cardoso-Rojo, Esq.
Carl Patrick Castellan, Esq.
Dana Cheng, Esq.

Joanne Chormanski, Esq.
Charles Coleman, Esq.
Timothy Decicco, Esq.
Rudolph DeWinter, Esq.
Pragatee Dhakal, Esq.
R. Brent English, Esq.
James Fitzpatrick, Esq.
Rachel Freier, Esq.
Renee Gallagher, Esq.
Victor Genao
Yola Ghaleb, Esq.
William Gibson, Esq.
Kimberly Gold, Esq.
Susan Harkins, Esq.
Leslie Harris, Esq.
Benjamin Harvey, Esq.
Morgan Hayes, Esq.
Stephen Hellman, Esq.
Vicki Z. Holleman, Esq.
Angel Ho
Mee Ho, Esq.
Elizabeth Hyon, Esq.
Chris Inoue, Esq.
Alina Jacobs
Quinlan Jeremiah, Esq.
Meredith Jones, Esq.
Evelyn Kalenscher, Esq.
Correy Kamin, Esq.
Stanford Kaplan, Esq.
Sharon Katz, Esq.
Jennifer Klein, Esq.
Sally Lake, Esq.
Nicholas Laveris, Esq.
Sunjae Lee, Esq.
Katherine Levitan, Esq.
Paige Machover, Esq.
Felicia Mann, Esq.
Bryne Margaret, Esq.
Zachary Mason, Esq.
John Balch McBride, Esq.
Kate McDonough, Esq.
John McQueen, Esq.
Andrea Mendez, Esq.
Diane Mirabiot, Esq.

Michelle Moldavan, Esq.
Ryan Moreno, Esq.
Charles Mottier, Esq.
Hannah Mulvihill, Esq.
Rachel Natelson, Esq.
Kimberly Nathan, Esq.
Benita Oberlander, Esq.
Michael Palczewski, Esq.
Carlos Pelayo, Esq.
Mishael Pine, Esq.
Noah Qiao, Esq.
Jeremiah Quilan, Esq.
Magrit Reiner, Esq.
Ashlyn Rich
Eric Roper, Esq.
Steven Rosenzweig, Esq.
Jay Rubin, Esq.
Ruth Schlesinger, Esq.
Samantha Schreiber
Martin Schwartz, Esq.
Kyriakos Semertzidis
Reshma Shah, Esq.
Ryan Sharpe, Esq.
Stephen Shattuck, Esq.
Merele-Daniel Shymanski
Lewis Silverman, Esq.
Erin Simmons, Esq.
Matthew Singer
Starvos Skenderis, Esq.
Jim Slattery, Esq.
Edwin Smith, Esq.
Ruth Stein, Esq.
Edisha Stephen
Richard M. Stone, Esq.
Jonathan Tam, Esq.
Myrna Tinaco-Rodriguez, Esq.
Julius Towers, Esq.
David Turchi, Esq.
Callistus Uwakwe, Esq.
Rachel Vincent, Esq.
Judy Woods, Esq.
Marie Claude Wrenn, Esq.
Po Yuen, Esq.
Villa Yolanda, Esq.

New York State Courts Access to Justice Program

<http://www.nycourts.gov/nya2j>

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