



PRESS RELEASE

**New York State
Unified Court System**

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Date: September 29, 2021

New Juror Orientation Video Instructs New York State Jurors on Hidden Bias

NEW YORK—The New York State Court System, in collaboration with the Perception Institute, has created a new video to instruct jurors, at the very start of their service, on implicit bias—bias that is unconscious and automatic. Titled “Jury Service and Fairness,” the video describes what implicit bias is, explains why the way our brains work can lead to bias, and discusses strategies that jurors can employ to help ensure they are making decisions without relying on underlying biases or stereotypes.

The new juror video features Chief Judge Janet DiFiore, along with Professor Rachel Godsil and Afua Addo of the Perception Institute, which uses cutting-edge research to craft real-world solutions to reduce discrimination and harms linked to race, gender and other identity differences.

Professor Godsil, the Institute’s co-founder and director and a Distinguished Professor of Law at Rutgers Law School, and Ms. Addo, the Institute’s deputy director of programs

and training, worked with Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Justice Initiatives, Hon. Edwina Mendelson, Michelle Smith and Rosemary Martinez-Borges of Judge Mendelson's Office for Justice Initiatives and the Court System's Jury Support Office, led by Jessica Simard, and documentary filmmaker Jennifer Dworkin in producing the new video. The script was carefully developed, incorporating the latest ideas as identified by the social science experts as effective in countering biases.

"Juries make important decisions that affect many lives and issues of concern to our communities. The Court System's goal in every jury trial is to seat jurors who will be impartial," said Chief Judge DiFiore. "The new juror video, by alerting jurors to the dangers of hidden biases, will serve to promote the fairness of our juries and justice system. I am grateful to the Perception Institute, the courts' Office for Justice Initiatives and Jury Support Office, and Jennifer Dworkin for their hard work and collaboration on this important new resource for New York jurors."

"Implicit bias exists across every sector, and its profound effects run deep in our justice system. While the law requires juries to consider each person individually and without reliance on stereotypes, research shows that biases can prevent people from acting fairly," said Professor Godsil. "This new video will provide jurors with effective solutions to prevent implicit biases from affecting their decision-making process. We thank Judge DiFiore and the courts' Office of Justice Initiatives for their commitment to ensuring New York's judicial system is fair and just."

"Unconscious associations can prevent jurors from viewing people as individuals, leading them to make decisions that are not based on the evidence presented in the courtroom, said Afua Addo. "When we think or talk about our biases, we can interrupt their power over our decisions. This video will move us closer to securing the fairness our justice system depends upon, and we thank the Court System for its partnership in this effort."

The release of “Jury Service and Fairness” is among the newest steps taken to advance the Court System’s Equal Justice Initiative—a comprehensive, statewide effort to address racial bias within the courts—with all prospective New York State jurors required to view the new video as part of their orientation process.

Additionally, in furthering the goals of the Equal Justice Initiative, the Court System is in the process of adopting judge’s instructions to jurors that explain the concept of implicit bias and remind jurors to be aware of their own underlying biases in their decision-making.

The “Jury Service and Fairness” video and transcript are available at www.nyjuror.gov.

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