



NEWS RELEASE

New York State
Unified Court System

Hon. Joseph A. Zayas
Chief Administrative Judge

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Unified Court System Announces New Components of Its Anti-Bias and Discrimination Training Efforts

The implementation of new training programs demonstrates the judiciary's commitment to addressing antisemitism and all religious discrimination amid a marked increase in hate crimes

NEW YORK—Chief Administrative Judge Joseph A. Zayas, First Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Norman St. George, and the leadership of the state Office of Court Administration today announced the establishment of new components of its continuing efforts to combat bias and identity-based hatred as part of their focus on ensuring that no court system employee or court user faces hate or discrimination of any kind. This series of seminars, which will begin on January 23, 2024, with a session focused on antisemitism, will be a key element of the judiciary's ongoing work to fulfill its mission to deliver equal justice under the law and to achieve the just and fair resolution of all matters that come before the courts.

In response to recent reports of an increase in hate crimes in New York, including a dramatic increase of incidents involving antisemitism, the Judicial Institute and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion are planning a range of training programs to address hate crimes, bias, discrimination, and identity-based hatred. Specific planning for the new training has been organized over recent weeks by Deputy Chief Administrative Judges Edwina G. Richardson and Deborah A. Kaplan. The first session of the training, scheduled to take place in January, will focus on combating antisemitism. Planned sessions on hate crimes and Islamophobia will follow in the coming months.

Combined with its existing mandatory anti-bias training, the UCS's new, more targeted programming will offer the court system's 15,000 employees and judges an opportunity to reflect on recent events and the grave challenges that many people of different identities and faiths are currently confronting here in New York, and to focus on enhancing partnerships within the UCS workforce as a strength for moving forward. The training initiatives will focus on the impact of identity-based hatred and bias and the strategies for eliminating them from our court system.

"What we have seen playing out in recent weeks is unconscionable and difficult to comprehend," Judge Zayas said on Monday. "At the Unified Court System, our employees, who reflect the rich and varied diversity of people across our great state, are our greatest resource. With these new training programs, I am confident we will be building a stronger, more inclusive environment in the courts, which will help ensure that we are operating with sensitivity, integrity and transparency, and that all who enter or work in our courts are treated with respect, dignity, and professionalism."

Judge St. George joined Judge Zayas and the UCS leadership in reaffirming the collective commitment to promoting a court system that is free from all forms of bias and discrimination and to fostering a judiciary where people see each other's humanity, communicate effectively with one another, and where everyone feels safe.

"Because of the important work being done in all of our courts, every day, it is imperative that we raise awareness about the corrosive impact of hate and stand up together to reinforce one another's perspectives and to continue cultivating what is a longstanding culture in the judiciary of deep understanding," said Judge St. George.

We take this opportunity to remind all judges and court personnel of our obligation to achieve a court system that is free of any bias, harassment, or discrimination, as part of our commitment to promoting equal justice for all.

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