

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER OF THE
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE OF THE COURTS**

Pursuant to the authority vested in me, and upon consultation with and approval by the Chief Judge and the Presiding Justices of the Appellate Division, First and Second Judicial Departments, I hereby adopt, effective February 11, 2014, the following rules relating to a pilot program for provision of pro bono non-legal services to unrepresented litigants in consumer credit, housing, and others matters where such services are urgently needed.

1. The Court Navigators Program

There is hereby established a pilot “Court Navigators Program” of the Unified Court System, in the New York City Civil Court and in such other courts and parts as shall be designated by the Chief Administrator of the Courts, for the purpose of providing essential non-legal services, without cost, to unrepresented litigants by qualified non-lawyers (“Navigators”). The program initially shall be established in the following locations:

1. Civil Court, Bronx County (consumer credit matters); and
2. Civil Court, Kings County (Housing Part).

2. Standards, Qualifications, and Assignment of Court Navigators

A. The Chief Administrator of the Courts shall establish minimum qualifications, education, and training standards for Court Navigators. These shall include an educational and field training course, pursuant to a curriculum approved by the Chief Administrator or her designee. The Chief Administrator shall maintain a list of qualified Navigators eligible for appointment pursuant to this program.

B. Court Navigators shall be assigned by, and act under the supervision of, not-for-profit service providers approved for this purpose by the Chief Administrator. For purposes of this pilot program, approved providers include the following:

1. The New York State Access to Justice Program (A2J)
2. University Settlement
3. Housing Court Answers

3. Duties and Limitations of Court Navigators

A. Upon the assignment of a Court Navigator, the Navigator may, in conformance with standards and guidelines approved by the Chief Administrator of the Courts or her designee:

(1) inform the unrepresented party about, and assist in, the completion of court-designed and court-approved “do-it-yourself” form documents, and the use of Law Help to obtain legal information or to locate an attorney;

(2) assist the unrepresented party in the gathering and organization of documents relating to the case;

(3) inform the unrepresented party about, and assist in, the scheduling of court proceedings;

(4) accompany the unrepresented party to court appearances and, if directed by the court, answer factual questions posed by the court;

(5) inform the unrepresented party about, and assist in, obtaining available court services (such as interpreter services); and

(6) provide such other non-legal information and perform such other non-legal services as the court may direct.

B. In the performance of these services, Court Navigators may not:

(1) provide legal advice, legal counseling, or (unless in a manner approved by the Chief Administrator or her designee) legal information to the unrepresented litigant;

(2) draft, execute, serve, or file with the court any documents on behalf of the unrepresented litigant (other than the provision of assistance in completing court-approved “do-it-yourself” documents as described above);

(3) hold themselves out as representing, speaking for, or advocating on behalf of a litigant, or act in any manner as to convey the impression that they are legal practitioners or are associated with a law office;

(4) address, or conduct negotiations with, opposing counsel, unless at the court’s direction;

(5) address the court on behalf of the unrepresented litigant, unless to provide factual information at the court’s direction; or

(6) perform any service that constitutes the practice of law.

C. Court Navigators shall receive neither direct nor indirect compensation from the unrepresented parties to whom they provide services.

D. Court Navigators shall follow the court’s directives at all times.



Chief Administrative Judge of the Courts

Dated: February 10, 2014

AO/42/14