



New York State Unified Court System

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Chief Administrative Judge Joseph A. Zayas



Hon. Ellen N. Biben, Administrative Judge of New York County Supreme Court, Criminal Term, and Presiding Judge of the Felony Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) Part, congratulates a graduate of the ATI court.



Chief Judge Rowan D. Wilson addresses the first meeting on the future of the Harlem Community Justice Center on E. 121st St.



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Report of the Chief Administrator of the Courts for the Calendar Year January 1 through December 31, 2025

Rowan D. Wilson

Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals and the State of New York

Joseph A. Zayas

Chief Administrative Judge of the State of New York

**Associate Judges of the
Court of Appeals**

Jenny Rivera

Michael J. Garcia

Madeline Singas

Anthony Cannataro

Shirley Troutman

Caitlin J. Halligan

**Presiding Justices of the
Appellate Division**

Dianne T. Renwick
First Department

Hector D. LaSalle
Second Department

Elizabeth A. Garry
Third Department

Gerald J. Whalen
Fourth Department

**Deputy Chief
Administrative Judges**

Norman St. George
First Deputy
Chief Administrative Judge

Edwina G. Richardson
Deputy Chief Administrative Judge
for Justice Initiatives

James P. Murphy
Deputy Chief Administrative Judge
for Courts Outside New York City

Adam Silvera
Deputy Chief Administrative Judge
for the New York City Courts

Statewide Coordinating Judges

Richard Rivera
Statewide Coordinating Judge for
Family Court Matters

Jeffrey S. Sunshine
Statewide Coordinating Judge for
Matrimonial Matters

Debra J. Young
Statewide Coordinating Judge for
Problem-Solving Courts

**Administrative Judges
New York City**

Suzanne J. Adams
Civil Matters,
First Judicial District

Ellen N. Biben
Criminal Matters,
First Judicial District

Genine D. Edwards
Civil Matters,
Second Judicial District

Matthew J. D'Emic
Criminal Matters,
Second Judicial District

Marguerite A. Grays
Civil Matters,
Eleventh Judicial District

Michelle A. Johnson
Criminal Matters,
Eleventh Judicial District

Joseph Capella
Civil Matters,
Twelfth Judicial District

Alvin Yearwood
Criminal Matters,
Twelfth Judicial District

Raymond L. Rodriguez
Civil & Criminal Matters,
Thirteenth Judicial District

Shahabuddeen A. Ally
New York City Civil Court

Tamiko Amaker
New York City Criminal Court

Anne-Marie Jolly
New York City Family Court

**Administrative Judges
Outside New York City**

Christina L. Ryba
Third Judicial District

Kris K. Singh
Fourth Judicial District

Deborah H. Karalunas
Fifth Judicial District

Eugene D. Faughnan
Sixth Judicial District

William K. Taylor
Seventh Judicial District

Amy C. Martoche
Eighth Judicial District

Anne E. Minihan
Ninth Judicial District

Vito M. DeStefano
Tenth Judicial District,
Nassau County

Andrew A. Crecca
Tenth Judicial District,
Suffolk County

Richard E. Sise
Presiding Judge,
Court of Claims





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New York State Unified Court System

Hon. Rowan D. Wilson

Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals and State of New York



Stare decisis is overrated. Asked whether he trusted his imagination more than his knowledge, Albert Einstein responded: “I am enough of the artist to draw freely upon my imagination. Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world.” In the fields of science, medicine, art, literature, sports, music, and almost every other human endeavor, imagination fuels progress, and we laud it. Even in law, which doggedly attempts to resist change in the name of stability, progress comes through imagination: the imagination that, despite what was

once indisputable conventional wisdom, governmental legitimacy should be based on popular consent, not divine right; slavery is evil; women are not inferior to men; and children have rights.

As you read the short writings in this year’s annual report, both from my colleagues and from those who have experienced the New York State Unified Court System as litigants, I ask you to keep a few things in mind. Understand that people will always have problems and disputes that they cannot resolve peacefully and permanently unaided. Accept that some transgressions, problems and disputes can be prevented or avoided, and some cannot. Expect that the role of a good government is to prevent or avoid those that can be prevented or avoided where it is better to do so than to let them occur and resolve them afterwards. And for those that cannot reasonably be avoided or prevented, admit that it is our job to use our collective imagination to dream up better ways to resolve those transgressions, problems, and disputes.

As the poet Percy Shelley wrote, “[T]o be greatly good, [you] must imagine intensely and comprehensively; [you] must put [yourself] in the place of another and many others; the pains and pleasures of [the] species must become [your] own. The great instrument of moral good is the imagination.” It is our mission to care for those who come to the courts, as well as those who are at risk of coming, as if we were they. For, in a sense, we are. Our imagination allows and demands it.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Rowan D. Wilson".



New York State Unified Court System

Hon. Joseph A. Zayas
Chief Administrative Judge



The story of the Unified Court System is a story of people helping people. Yet years of insufficient Judiciary budgets led to a drastic reduction in nonjudicial personnel, leaving inadequate staffing to provide the level of meaningful, efficient access to justice that the public has a right to expect. As the Court System's role in helping address some of society's most pressing problems expands, a workforce of 14,000 (it exceeded 17,000 in 2009) was simply inadequate.

Chief Judge Wilson and I have made it a priority to reverse this demoralizing trend and, with the support of our partners in the Executive and Legislative branches, by the end of this fiscal year we will finally return to 2009 staffing levels.

Since July 2023, we have boosted our nonjudicial workforce by 1,700 employees. We've increased the programmatic staff in our life-changing problem-solving courts by 30%. Family Court staffing is up 20% since Fiscal Year 2024, helping to reduce chronic backlogs. With increased nonjudicial staff, we have been able to move forward on a paradigm changing case processing initiative in New York City that will expedite the exchange of information, more promptly connect appropriate individuals to treatment or other alternatives-to-incarceration programs, hasten meaningful plea negotiations, move cases to trial when individuals choose to exercise that right — and, equally important, bring justice to victims in a more timely manner.

For this annual report, our 48th since the Unified Court System was created, we invited several people who came to the courts in moments of profound crisis to discuss how their lives and the lives of their loved ones were transformed by the support and engagement they found in one of our problem-solving courts. Their candid, heart-felt essays reveal so much more than any statistical analysis ever could. We have helped these people reverse course and return to leading law-abiding, productive, fulfilling lives. With the continued support of our partners in the Executive and Legislative branches, we will continue to strengthen our State, one case at a time.

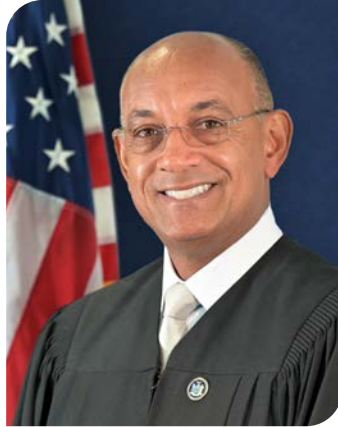
A handwritten signature in blue ink, likely belonging to Hon. Joseph A. Zayas.

This 2025 edition of the Annual Report of the Chief Administrator of the Courts has been submitted to the Governor and Legislature in accordance with Section 212 of the Judiciary Law.



New York State Unified Court System

Hon. Norman St. George
First Deputy Chief Administrative Judge



As the United States of America approaches the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence—a significant quarter-millennium milestone—it is fitting to reflect on the founding document that not only established our freedom, but further declared the purpose of our liberation: to proclaim that all people are created equal and are endowed with unalienable rights, which include life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. This monumental document paved the way for the United States Constitution, the supreme law of our land, which established powers among branches and levels of government, creating our Judicial Branch.

In the enduring words of Alexander Hamilton, “the first duty of society is justice.” Without the Judicial Branch, justice cannot exist, and in its absence, society itself begins to falter. Essential to preventing the disintegration of our foundation is the daily work of our Courts, as they are the places where individuals seek to resolve differences and disputes and pursue redress for injury and wrongdoing. The Courts provide an impartial, prompt, safe and orderly process for the administration of justice.

This is especially true of our innovative problem-solving courts, which embody a practical application of our Declaration of Independence by focusing on the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Beyond traditional adjudication, problem-solving courts provide opportunities to break down barriers to stability, sobriety, employment, and other basic needs by focusing on rehabilitation and root causes; an approach that promotes fairness, offers tailored justice, emphasizes accountability, and improves public safety outcomes.

As the Declaration of Independence nears its 250th anniversary, our courts, both traditional and innovative, reaffirm the commitment to always serve the law with equality, humility, integrity, and unwavering resolve.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "N. St. George".



New York State Unified Court System

Justin A. Barry, Esq.
Executive Director



Our Courts shine in the civic environment as solvers of problems, regardless of the type of case. That's what courts do and have always done, solve problems.

With the leadership example set by the Chief Judge, Chief Administrative Judge and the rest of the judicial leadership team, the 1,400 judges and 17,000 non-judicial employees of the Unified Court System are expanding that traditional mission with a new paradigm in which the goal is to recognize and address underlying problems rather than simply resolve disputes in favor of one party and against another.

We have long used terms like “diversion” or providing an “off ramp” for people involved in the criminal justice system. But viewing those concepts in isolation might sidestep the point or can amount to nothing but kicking the can down the road. The goal of this administration is not merely diversion “from” jail or prison or juvenile confinement, but diversion “to” a healthy and productive lifestyle. Similarly, an “off ramp” needs to lead somewhere positive, not simply “off” the criminal justice or Family Court highway. Otherwise, it’s a dead-end or U-turn.

Utilizing both incentives and consequential thinking, our problem-solving courts have long offered individuals with an addiction, PTSD, mental health issues, sociological challenges or other impediments a real shot at rehabilitation and redemption. By providing the support they need and the accountability we demand, our judges demonstrate daily that a criminal and family justice system can be both compassionate and firm.

Many of the individuals who came into our courts under threat of incarceration are now working, supporting families, paying taxes, and not committing crimes. Numerous studies show that problem-solving courts consistently reduce recidivism rates in comparison with traditional court models, ultimately generating net financial savings.

But in addition to any monetary benefit, we restore human potential.

Our call now is to bring that same “problem-solving” approach to cases heard outside of the traditional problem-solving courts. Whether it a simple landlord-tenant dispute or a complex commercial case, we seek to resolve the problem rather than simply say “you win” or “you lose.”

In this way, all of us, pulling together, work to change – and sometimes save – lives. That is government, our Third Branch of government, at its best.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Justin A. Barry".





Second Chances

The 2025 State of the Judiciary Address



“Put simply, our criminal justice system isn’t working. Maybe it hasn’t really ever worked. Prolonged incarceration is very expensive, and it does not make us safer. It entrenches poverty, perpetuates cycles of violence, and harms many of the New Yorkers we are trying to protect and serve.”

Chief Judge Rowan D. Wilson

Chief Judge Rowan D. Wilson made this unusual admission during his 2025 State of the Judiciary Address in February. To prove his point, the Chief Judge welcomed several guests, including the Commissioner of the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision; two individuals who spent years in prison for serious crimes; and two individuals who have been incarcerated for a quarter century with no end in sight. The latter two were transported from their prison cells under armed guard to Court of Appeals Hall in Albany. The guests punctuated the Chief Judge’s support for the Second Look Act, proposed legislation that would allow judges to resentence individuals serving long prison terms.



DOCCS Commissioner Daniel F. Martuscello III is the first former Correction Officer to ever lead the Department, and the first ever featured at a State of the Judiciary event. He told the audience that with nearly three decades’ experience in the prison system, he believes firmly in the power of rehabilitation and redemption because he has seen how people, with appropriate support, can turn their lives around. Viewers of the State of the Judiciary saw and heard the evidence first-hand.



“I have devoted myself to the ideas of redemption and rehabilitation, to proving that I can be a productive member of a community.”

Christopher Martinez

Twenty-nine words. “[Y]ou’re a very dangerous person and you need to be removed from society for a long period of time, and I am going to make sure that you are.” At my sentencing, these 29 words followed my conviction for crimes of murder in the second degree, assault, and weapons possession. I was 17 years old when I committed these crimes, and I was sentenced to 65 years to life—a de facto life without parole sentence. I am still serving my sentence at Shawangunk Correctional Facility.

When I was sentenced, I was a high school dropout, who never had the chance to vote, obtain a driver’s license, serve on a jury panel or pay taxes. And I may never have those chances... I was raised in poverty—by parents who were addicted to drugs. As a child, I was shuffled between five homes and attended seven schools. I was an unknown passenger on the school-to-prison pipeline...

Was I, a 17-year-old, first time offender, incorrigible? Was I beyond redemption and rehabilitation? What did the judge see in me that made him order a sentence that I could not survive? Maturing into adulthood in prison was a dark time for me—the constant exposure to violence: street violence, family violence, prison violence caused me to turn the violence inwardly, and so I once contemplated suicide. I just didn’t know if I was capable of surviving to see my first parole board, in March of 2049...

I have devoted myself to the ideas of redemption and rehabilitation, to proving that I can be a productive member of a community, to proving that others can live safely around me. Today, I am one of many creating ... a school-to-prison-to-college pipeline—that serves community interests, rather than taxing resources; that sounds on the principles of community building through mentorship, restoration, and trust.



“I decided to stop getting in trouble and be a role model worthy of my daughters’ love..”

Tami Eldridge

I am 51 years old. I am currently incarcerated at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility. I have been incarcerated for the past 25 years.

I was born and raised in Queens, New York. My mother and father separated when I was very young. I lived with my mother, but my father’s house was my refuge from my mother’s physical and mental abuse. When I was 15, my father was sentenced to 10 years on drug charges. Without his protection, my mother threw me out of the house; I became homeless. My brother was brutally murdered. He was sodomized, choked, and fatally stabbed with a screwdriver...In an act of total panic and desperation, of wanting to get myself and my children back to our new life in Louisiana, I took someone’s life. To this day, it is an act I regret with all my being.

I carried my fear and anger into the courtroom and into prison. I got into arguments with the judge, and serious fights with other inmates. My anger became a plague. I was arrested over 27 times in prison. I spent a collective 13 years in the box—solitary confinement...

Twelve years ago, I decided to stop getting in trouble and be a role model worthy of my daughters’ love. I decided to get the education I had always wanted. I realized that I was my own worst enemy, and I needed to let my anger go. And I did. It was the turning point in my life.

In 2017, I earned an associate’s degree in liberal arts from Marymount Manhattan College. In 2023, I earned a bachelor’s degree from Marymount in Sociology. In 2024, I earned a master’s degree from New York Theological Seminary in Professional Studies. I am currently pursuing my second master’s degree...

I know that I might never leave Bedford. But others will. And so I help everyone I can get signed up for school. I help the other women at Bedford do the work of turning their lives around and being prepared to go home, and most importantly, I help them become the best versions of themselves.



“My story shows what’s possible when we invest in our incarcerated population no matter how grave the crimes they once committed.”

Mujahideen Muhammad

Drug addiction and mental illness plagued my family. When I was young, my father abandoned me, my mother and two sisters. Then, my mother abandoned us too, for five years, as she struggled with drug addiction...

At 14, I was arrested for attempted robbery and sentenced to 12 months in a juvenile residential facility. My values were so poor that I turned a 12-month sentence into a four-year stay. I spent my last year at Harlem Valley Juvenile Residential Facility, where I spent nine months in an isolation unit because of my unruly behavior... A year later, at the age of 19, I was arrested for murder and sentenced to 25 years to life...

My turning point was 2014. By then, I had been imprisoned for 15 years and I finally reached the point where I was completely dissatisfied with myself. So, I decided to better myself by pursuing a higher education...

In 2017, while at Sing Sing Correctional Facility, I entered Hudson Link’s Mercy University College program. Six years later, I graduated with a Bachelor’s degree in Behavioral Science. I was the salutatorian with a 3.98 GPA. Six months later, I entered New York Theological Seminary and graduated in June 2024 with a Master’s degree in Professional Studies. I had a 4.0 GPA. Because of my participation in positive programs and my educational achievements, I made my first parole board in December 2023. I was released from Sing Sing in April 2024 after spending 24-and-a-half years in prison.

Today, I work at Columbia University, an Ivy League school, after being convicted of an A-1 felony. I, like so many other formerly incarcerated people, am proof that we can be put in trustworthy positions and help improve our communities and society overall.

My story shows what’s possible when we invest in our incarcerated population no matter how grave the crimes they once committed...I am one of many, many formerly incarcerated men and women who have successfully transitioned back into society.



“For many of us, our destiny seemed etched in stone: from poverty, to the precinct, to the courtroom, and ultimately to a prison cell.”

Jarrell Daniels

I am a community organizer and a PhD candidate. I stand before you today with profound gratitude and a deep sense of reflection, humbled by the journey that has brought me from incarceration to academia...

I grew up in a neighborhood plagued by poverty and violence, in the South Bronx. At 15, I was initiated into a gang and became entangled in a cycle of neighborhood violence. I dropped out of school and dedicated my life to the streets. My wake-up call came just three years later, at 18, when I was charged with a near-fatal shooting in a 10-man gang indictment, alongside several of my childhood friends, and sentenced to six years in prison. For many of us, our destiny seemed etched in stone: from poverty, to the precinct, to the courtroom, and ultimately to a prison cell. But I know now, that path is not immutable.

Even amid the chaos and dysfunction of Rikers Island, I managed to get my GED diploma after just two months of being held without bail...

Another critical step in transforming my life came just a few weeks before my release. It was there that I met Dr. Geraldine Downey, who invited me to enroll in my first college course... Inside Criminal Justice, or ICJ as we call it. ICJ was a unique college course that brought incarcerated men together with prosecutors and changed my perspective on the justice system...

Now as a doctoral student at New York University, studying psychology, my contributions to society have shifted to evaluating public safety approaches, like the Project Restore gang intervention we piloted last year in Bed-Stuy Brooklyn. My goal is to develop an evidence-based program that integrates education, mentorship, trauma healing and career pathways for at-risk youth to break cycles of poverty and violence.

No matter where you start, the opportunity to create a new story should always be within reach.



ATI Court Graduate Johnny Basnight addresses a packed courtroom at 100 Centre Street

Solving Real Problems for Real People

A Unique Approach to Addressing Underlying Causes



“When I met Amber Donovan from HOPE Court, she saw something in me I could not yet see, a woman with potential. She also saw the deep anger, pain, and hurt I had been carrying for most of my life. I had always dreamed of helping others, but my addiction was all I knew, and I did not believe change was possible. Amber, and the HOPE Court team, showed me that I was capable of so much more.”

Alisha Gelling, Binghamton HOPE Court

The Court System exists to solve problems in a peaceful, neutral forum with one mission: justice under the law. The New York State Unified Court System is a national leader in the development of specialized “problem-solving” courts that focus on treatment and accountability for individuals in the criminal justice system. Each of these courts—349 in total—features specially trained judges and staff, dedicated dockets, intensive judicial monitoring, and coordination with outside services and agencies.

The Court System also has a robust elder abuse prevention initiative. The New York State Judicial Committee on Elder Abuse is tasked with raising awareness of elder abuse and developing programs, policies, and protocols to address the Court System’s handling of the growing number of cases involving older litigants in both civil and criminal matters.

- 91 Adult Drug Treatment Courts**
- 45 Integrated Domestic Violence Parts**
- 42 Mental Health Courts**
- 38 Domestic Violence Courts**
- 37 Veterans Treatment Courts**
- 31 Opioid Courts**
- 22 Family Treatment Courts**
- 16 Impaired Driving Courts**
- 12 Human Trafficking Intervention Courts**
- 6 Emerging Adult Courts**
- 6 U-CAN Courts**
- 3 Juvenile Treatment Courts**
- 3 Community Courts**
- 1 Alternative to Incarceration Court**



Hon. Edwina G. Richardson

Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Justice Initiatives



It is such a privilege to be in my 23rd year serving as a judge for the New York State Unified Court System. This past year, I twice had the rare joy of reconnecting with people—both coincidentally named Nicholas—whose adoptions I presided over years ago. Nicholas C. told me, “Although I was young, I have never forgotten the impact that day had on my life and now that I prepare to apply to law school, I find myself reflecting on the people who shaped my path and you are one of them.” The other Nicholas’ sister waited in a long line to share that her brother was doing well.

Hearing about their successes was deeply meaningful. Judges often make decisions in thorny circumstances without knowing their lasting impact. We hope for the best, but rarely see what happens after a case closes. Reconnecting and sharing the positive trajectory of their lives was a truly welcomed gift.

The following stories demonstrate the enduring impact our courts have on those passing through our doors, particularly our problem-solving, accountability, and treatment courts. The stories also illustrate our unwavering commitment to delivering equal justice under the law for everyone. They also show how embracing Chief Judge Wilson’s vision of our courts as problem-solvers helps us empower individuals to reclaim their lives. By offering opportunities where “traditional” models might have left only incarceration, our courts generate transformational ripple effects.



Ricky Heffner | Monroe County Veterans Treatment Court



“I am the luckiest man in the world,
and I’ve barely gotten started!”

During the pandemic, I suffered the unexpected, back-to-back loss of three of my closest friends. I’d known them for 20 years. Literally, they were the first real friends I’d allowed myself after leaving service.

The first was a crusty Vietnam Vet with multiple debilitating physical injuries, compliments of the War, who nevertheless learned to embrace life and count every day as a blessing. Then there was a Goldstar Dad, who was forever changed by, and continually struggled with, the loss of his son. His wonderful wife followed six months later. I was devastated.

Losing these very special people put me in a very dark place. I applied copious amounts of alcohol just to turn off the noise in my head. I tried to drown my

sorrows, as well as my anger, because COVID prevented me from visiting any of them during their illnesses, attending their funerals, or even just saying goodbye in person.

My journey to Vet Court began with my third arrest for DWI on 8 December 2021, my wife’s birthday. As I was mulling over exactly what I’d gotten myself into, I concluded that, no doubt, this time, I would be sentenced to time behind bars. Fortunately, God had a different plan for me, and I was given a gift: Veterans Court.

Throughout the program, I was impressed with the multi-faceted level of support in court and the positive attitude of everyone I encountered there. It was nothing like I’d expected.

At my initial appearance in Vet Court I first heard this preamble from the judge: “This is what I expect from you:”

Rule 1 – Do not lie to me!

Rule 2 – If you mess up, call your court contact within 24 hours!

Rule 3 – Surrender to the process, and do as you are instructed!



Graduating Veterans Court on 1 May 2023, I couldn’t have felt more grounded. Yet, my journey through Vet Court was never meant to end because I’d graduated. I was so energized and motivated by the program, especially their phenomenal team, that I knew I had to be part of it, to help other vets succeed and move on to happy, healthy, productive lives, just as I had done. It is a blessing to be part of this wonderful, caring group, as much as knowing I now have the ability to help others. I am the luckiest man in the world, and I’ve barely gotten started!



G. H. | Suffolk County Family ConcepTS Court



“ConcepTS provides kids like me with an army of social workers and community partners who provide us with support and services, a life raft.”

Growing up, I felt alone. I just kept everything to myself. But I never had to hide my feelings more than that day in 7th grade, when I was summoned to the guidance office and feared they’d learn I’d been cutting myself and would tell my mother.

My heart felt like it was beating out of my chest, my whole body was shaking with adrenaline. I walked into the social worker’s office and she smiled at me in an unsettlingly way. She told me she was worried about me. I knew exactly why I was there, but was hoping and praying I was wrong. “Can you roll up your sleeves for me and show me your wrists?”

I panicked but did what I was told, my eyes filling with tears and droplets of blood streaking down my arm and dripping to the floor. MY blood! I begged her not to tell my mom, but knew she would, and dreaded what would happen when I got home at 2:45.

When I walked into our home, I was met by my mom and her empty eyes. She smiled at me, gave me a hug then said, “You’re really my mini me!” What the hell does that even mean? She wasn’t mad. She was happy. For the first time ever, my mother seemed happy about something I did, proud of me. Finally!

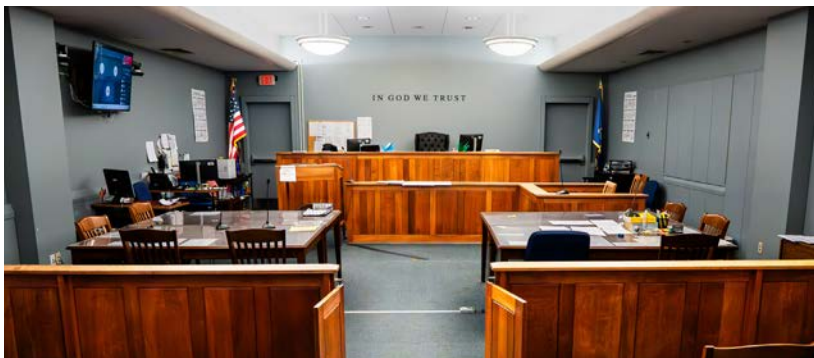
I started to crave the feeling of the sharp cold metal blade ripping open my skin and watching my tan skin turn red. It made me feel better. Knowing I had scars helped me fight a bigger battle — putting a smile on my face so my friends and family could be happy. Shortly after, my mom overdosed, my father went to jail and I was removed from their custody.

Before long, I committed a serious crime that could have landed me in a secure youth facility. But I came before Judge Fernando Camacho, who put me into the ConcepTS Court he created in Suffolk County. ConcepTS provides kids like me with an army of social workers and community partners who provide us with support and services, a life raft. They referred me to an organization called Herstory, and I no longer felt alone. I am now in recovery rather than in custody.



Sometimes when I’m up late at night, alone in my thoughts, I still feel like it was my fault. But when I wake up every morning, I remember that the main reason why I felt the need to cut myself open was to make other people feel better. I never wanted anyone to feel alone like I did, so I took my and everyone else’s pain and wrapped it up all into one tiny blade that made such a big difference.

With the help of the Court, the lesson I’ve learned is this: If people want to plant thorned seedlings in the back of your head, grab the weeds by the root and plant bigger flowers in your own head before you have no more soil to plant them in.



Jair Ford | Albany County U-CAN Court



“Although it sounds pretty crazy, getting arrested could end up being the best thing that ever happened to me.”

When they slapped those handcuffs on me, I couldn't believe that's where I was.

I'm not a “criminal.” I'm not a bad guy. I'd never been in any serious trouble before. I played professional basketball. I was working. I'd come home from Alabama to help out my mom and two little brothers.

Yeah, I got that gun in Alabama, where I could have gotten a permit but procrastinated. And I brought it to New York, but not because I planned to commit a crime. I just wanted to be able to protect myself and my mom and little brothers, if necessary, from the bad guys and gang bangers that were all over the neighborhood. And I knew there was no way New York would give a permit to a 27-year-old inner city Black guy who wanted a gun for protection from the thugs and addicts in the hood.

And then there was that argument with my roommates that brought the police and led to the search that led to my arrest for criminal possession of a weapon. My attorney told me I was possibly looking at several years in state prison. It was pretty bleak, but then I was offered a program I never heard of, “U-CAN.” They told me it was a mentoring program. I didn't think I needed or wanted a mentor, but if it'd keep me out of jail, I was willing to play along.

My attitude going in was not great, and Judge Andra Ackerman immediately held my feet to the fire, reminded me they were giving me one heck of an opportunity and told me if I didn't shape up, I'd find myself behind bars. Maybe I didn't take her seriously enough, and messed up. I found out really quick that she wasn't kidding. She put me in jail.

When I got out, they hooked me up with a mentor. I didn't think it was going to work because this “mentor” seemed to have nothing in common with me. He was a prominent businessman, Caucasian, and one of the premier realtors in the Capital Region, Kevin Clancy. What could he possibly know about life in my world? But we really hit it off.



Kevin helped me to see things long term and to plan for the future. He taught me about the stock market and what it takes to start and build a business. He taught me to make decisions and said the worst thing you can do is stand still. He taught me to trust myself and not second guess myself and not fear failure. We meet every week, and we're going to keep in touch after I graduate.

With Kevin, it all started clicking and I realized that Judge Ackerman and my probation officer, Jordan Rando, are my biggest cheerleaders as long as I'm doing what I'm supposed to and moving forward. When I go to court for my monthly check-in, and Judge Ackerman smiles and tells me how proud she is of me, it makes my whole week! I'm not going to let her down, or Jordan or Kevin. But most importantly, I'm not going to let Jair Malcolm Ford down. A year from now, I hope to be starting my own business.

Without U-CAN none of that would happen and I'd just be another state prison inmate. Although it sounds pretty crazy, getting arrested could end up being the best thing that ever happened to me.



Alisha Gelling | Elmira HOPE Court



“I am living proof that people can change.
My journey was not easy, but it was worth it.”

Behind the scenes, my life was a dark and frightening place, filled with mental, physical, sexual, and verbal abuse. I kept this pain buried for years, never speaking about it, and it fueled a downward spiral that took me to places I never imagined I would go.

My name is Alisha, and I am a woman in recovery from substance use disorder and mental health challenges. I am writing to share my journey, not to dwell on my past mistakes, but to show how, with the right support, people can transform their lives.

I am 48 years old and from Upstate New York. My struggle with drugs began when I was just 14 years old. For decades, my life was defined by cycles of addiction, brief periods of sobriety, and repeated setbacks. The only times I was truly sober were during my pregnancies or while incarcerated, times when I played the role I thought was expected of me, without making the deep changes I truly needed.

I have lived comfortably and in despair, in gated communities and in abandoned houses. Outward appearances never told the full story.

My most recent arrest became the turning point I didn't know I was searching for. At the time, I was shoplifting from store to store, alone, and without a single person I could truly open up to. When I was offered the option of the Heroin and Opioid Prevention (HOPE) Court, I agreed because I thought it might help me avoid the worst legal consequences. What I didn't realize was that this program would change everything.

When I met Amber Donovan from HOPE Court, she saw something in me I could not yet see, a woman with potential. She also saw the deep anger, pain, and hurt I had been carrying for most of my life. I had always dreamed of helping others, but my addiction was all I knew, and I did not believe change was possible. Amber, and the HOPE Court team, showed me that I was capable of so much more.



For the first time in my life, I allowed myself to be honest, completely honest, about my past and my struggles. I committed to outpatient treatment, opened up in therapy, and learned healthier ways to cope with my pain. HOPE Court didn't just address my charges; it gave me the tools, encouragement, and accountability to rebuild my life.

Today, I am proud to say that I graduated from HOPE Court and now work as a Peer Support Specialist. Every day, I have the privilege of helping others who are still trapped in the cycle I once lived in. I share my story to show them that recovery is possible, and that they, too, can create a life worth living. I am living proof that people can change. My journey was not easy, but it was worth it.

If I can do it, anyone can.



Cara Mia Canale | Schenectady Family Treatment Court



“Recovery isn’t just about getting your kids back; it’s about building the life you deserve.”

I signed into Family Treatment Court (FTC) because I wanted my kids home as fast as I could make that happen. What I didn’t realize was that agreeing to complete that program would completely change the outcome of my life and the lives of my children. I spent several years trying to complete FTC.

The first attempt, I took the “Cara Mia Canale pathway,” which is the path I had taken most of my life. I played the game. I completed the court-mandated services. But I didn’t work a true program of recovery. I didn’t surrender. I didn’t build a support system around me. I didn’t take suggestions. I was simply not using drugs and alcohol. Which isn’t addressing the root of the problem.

It wasn’t long after my kids were returned home, that I went back to using. I decided I didn’t need to follow a recovery pathway. I told myself that my disease was manageable and I could use

“sometimes.” I told myself “I’m a good mom; I just like to get high.” That’s what my addiction tells me. When I am isolated from my support, my mind will trick me into believing I can have “just one more.” My addiction tells me I should risk it all, and the only remedy is a strong support system and an active recovery program.

Abstinence wasn’t enough and Child Protective Services came into my life again and removed my kids for the second time. In that moment, I decided I needed to release control because my way isn’t working. I gave up my will and allowed people to help me. I went into residential treatment and completed the court-ordered services, not because I had to, but because I wanted to gain knowledge from them.

I immersed myself in the recovery community, just like I was told to, and I built my support system around me. FTC never wavered in their support. They provided me with every tool I needed for success. They didn’t give up on me, even when I had given up on myself. They held me accountable, but they also encouraged me, celebrated my wins, and reminded me that I was capable



“Cara Mia’s story is a profound example of perseverance, hope, and the power of second chances.”

Hon. James Doern

of so much more than I believed. FTC is a special program, one that changes lives if you let it. FTC helped me realize that drugs weren’t the problem, they were a symptom of a bigger problem. So, I worked on some things internally. I was able to gain full custody of my girls.

I’ve been able to turn my life completely around. I found suitable housing. I work with recovering and active addicts. I took the Peer Advocate class, and I have been able help people in early recovery. I pour back into the community that lifted me up. I’m back in school, working toward my CASAC. I was able to buy a car and pay off debt I had accumulated during my addiction.

Today, my life is beyond my wildest dreams. I owe so much of that to FTC, because they were the catalyst that set me on this path. They believed in me until I could believe in myself, and they showed me that recovery isn’t just about getting your kids back, it’s about building the life you deserve.



Heather Hill | Warren County Felony Drug Treatment Court



“It gave me a chance at life — a chance to start over, to heal, and to become the person I was always meant to be. It wasn’t just a program, it was a lifeline.”

Before entering the Drug Court program, I was trapped in the cycle of addiction. My life had spiraled out of control, and I had made decisions that alienated me from my family, friends and, most importantly, myself. The more I tried to numb my pain, the deeper I sank into self-destructive behaviors. I had been arrested several times for drug related offenses, and it seemed like there was no way out.

When I found myself facing felony charges, I was at rock bottom, staring at the consequences of my actions and wondering if I would ever be able to break free from addiction. The Warren County Felony Drug Court gave me more than just a way out of legal trouble. It gave me a chance at life — a chance to start over, to heal, and to become the person I was always meant to be. It wasn’t just a program; it was a lifeline.

Drug Court taught me that I was worthy of a second chance. It showed me that my past mistakes

didn’t define who I was or who I could become. Instead of feeling like a lost cause, I began to see myself as someone capable of change. The journey wasn’t easy — there were setbacks, moments of doubt, and times when I wanted to quit. But with the support of the Drug Court team, and my own determination, I persevered.

The most powerful takeaway was accountability. From the first day, I was held accountable for my actions. If I relapsed, there were consequences, but more importantly, there was a discussion about why it happened and what I could do differently moving forward.

The weekly drug testing and check-ins created a sense of urgency and discipline that I had never known before. It helped me stay focused on my recovery and gave me a reason to keep trying, even when I felt like giving up. More importantly, I began to understand that the accountability didn’t just come from the Drug Court— it had to come from within me. I had to take responsibility for my choices, my actions, and my future.



Another crucial element of the program was the therapy and support groups. These sessions were transformative and provided me with the emotional tools to understand and manage my addiction. Talking openly about my struggles and fears and mistakes allowed me to peel back the layers of shame and guilt that had been suffocating me for years.

Through counseling, I learned coping mechanisms to deal with the triggers and stressors that had once led me to use drugs as a form of escape. I also gained a better understanding of the psychological roots of my addiction, which helped me address the emotional wounds that had been festering for so long.

I am living proof that recovery is possible. My life is still a work in progress, but I am no longer the person I once was. I have learned to embrace my flaws, forgive myself for past mistakes, and celebrate the progress I’ve made. I now have the tools to handle life’s challenges without turning to substances for relief.



James Eleby | Manhattan Felony ATI Court



“Today, I’m clean, sober, employed, happy, and for the first time in my life I feel like a good man, a real ‘man’.”

My childhood in Harlem was all about trauma and a lot of violence. My earliest memories are my father beating up my mother.

I always would see police in the house, a lot of police, looking for my dad or arresting my dad. I grew up thinking that I wouldn’t be a “man” until I went to prison, because my dad had been to prison. My sisters’ boyfriends had been to prison. I grew up looking forward to going to prison. My father was a stick-up man and I wanted to be a stick-up kid.

So with a friend of mine, we did a robbery. Since I was young, I got four years in a place called Abbott House, a juvenile facility. I did that bid from ’83 to ’87. It was violent, lots of fights and sexual abuse.

In 1986, I was introduced to crack. We had a staff member who’d bring it in and we’d put it in our marijuana. I liked the high, the euphoria it gave me, and by the time I came home in ’87, when I was 19, I had a full-blown habit. I lived a life of crime and drugs, not eating, not sleeping, not washing myself, just putting crack

and alcohol in my body and living on the streets.

In 1989, I was selling crack for a guy that lived in Harlem, and his father. I was only selling the crack because they paid me in crack and could smoke as much as I wanted. But then I sold to two undercover and got arrested. They sent me to a program in Albany, but I continued to use and was in and out of the Albany County Jail and Schenectady County Jail.

Then, in ’95 I committed a robbery and I did a prison bid from 1995 to 2005. I came home in 2005, but I was only home for a month when I committed another robbery. I beat the rap but they violated my parole and sent me back for 18 months. About six weeks after I got back, I robbed a bank in Bethlehem, New York and did seven more years on that one.

I was on parole for the bank robbery and I did another robbery in Midtown Manhattan. I was using and, I don’t know how with my record, but my attorney got me into Judge Ellen Biben’s Felony ATI Court. She gave me a shot. But I struggled at the beginning and messed up and the attorney said the judge wanted to see me.



I said, “She don’t want to see me and I don’t want her to see me like this.” I’d been up for two, three days. I was dirty, high, intoxicated out of my mind. My attorney said, “The judge understands recovery. She needs to see you.” I was ugly, deformed. I didn’t want her to see what those drugs turned me into.

When I went to see her, I was embarrassed and scared and thought, this time, they’ll put me away for life. But she looked me in the eye and said softly, “Are you ready now?” I looked up at her, tears running down my cheeks and told her yes, finally, I am ready.

It was tough, really tough, and I messed up a couple times. But I got serious about my life. I started doing some different thinking, brought God into my life and learned that a stick-up man isn’t a “man” at all. A man is someone who’s responsible, works, supports himself and his family. Honestly, until then I never once thought I was the problem. I thought everyone else was the problem and I was the victim. I learned to take responsibility for my life, like a man.

Today, I’m clean, sober, employed, happy, and for the first time in my life I feel like a good man, a real “man.”





Chief Judge Rowan D. Wilson meeting with leadership on the future of the Harlem Community Justice Center

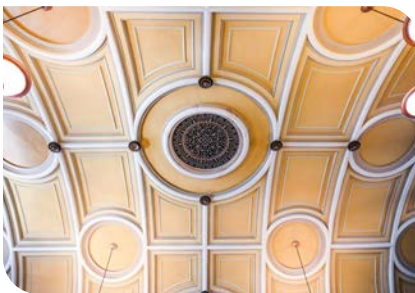
Community Courts

“You’ll find stories from graduates of our treatment courts, people who faced adversity and chose the hard work of change. I hope their stories move you, and that they serve as a reminder of the impact we can have when we lead with empathy, respect, and a shared belief in the power of recovery.”

Hon. Debra Young

Statewide Coordinating Judge for Problem-Solving Courts

Community Courts combine conventional punishments with alternative sanctions and on-site treatment and training in an effort to break the “revolving door” cycle of crime. They are a collaboration between traditionally separate entities, including citizens, criminal justice agencies, businesses, local civic organizations, government entities, and social service providers, which results in neighborhood-focused problem solving.



New York is a national and international leader in the development of Community Courts. The Midtown Community Court, located in Manhattan, was the first community court in the nation.

But our story is best told not by the overview above or the statistics, but through the experiences and eyes of people in our communities who found help, relief and justice in our courts.



Children's Centers

"I'm here to be a life saver, and sometimes that's just a hug or a smile, and sometimes it's directing them to a food pantry or social services. We're not only helping children but helping families. We are so much more than 'babysitters'."

Stefanie Kerr

Erie County Family Court Children's Center

Three decades ago, the New York State Unified Court System was the first in the nation to operate a network of Children's Centers. The mission is quite simple: to provide a safe, supportive haven for children in the courthouse; and to provide a vehicle for connecting families to needed services. The underlying premise is equally simple: when a child's life trajectory is improved by a small intervention at the right time, the effect is often generational, ultimately affecting not only the child whom we encounter but, down the line, the children of that child.



Many of the children who visit our courts are under six years of age, and a great many of them are poor and not receiving the health, educational and nutritional benefits to which they and their families are entitled, such as Head Start, WIC, SNAP, literacy and other community services. Through our Children's Centers we turn a problem—traumatized and underserved children and families—into an opportunity.



A visitor to a Children’s Center will see children playing together and supervised by childcare experts. They will see community volunteers and student interns helping with activities throughout the day. This safe, welcoming environment all begins with an intake interview. Staff discuss specifics of each child visiting the center such as allergies, special needs and services received by the child with the caregiver. This intake allows Children’s Center staff to appropriately care for the child and enrich their experience in the center.

“Most of us, in our careers or extracurricular activities, hope to ‘make a difference.’ Day to day, the Children’s Centers make a difference in children’s lives by replacing fears and frustrations with finger painting and a game of BINGO. They make the difference in families’ lives by making sure they don’t leave our courts unclothed or hungry.”

Rob Conlon
Statewide Program Manager



The Children’s Centers offer a wide variety of activities. Painting, dramatic play, board games, and puzzles are just a few of the options available for children at the Children’s Centers. Staff also encourage children to explore the world around them with activities that teach about topics like the weather, space, and historical figures. Connections to local communities are highlighted in the Centers, including seasonal activities like apple picking or promotion of children’s programming in libraries and museums.

The Children’s Centers are literary-rich environments with reading areas and books donated by libraries and others to allow children to take home a book of their choosing during their visit. They may even see court staff, including judges, reading to children on their breaks.

At its core, the New York State Unified Court System’s purpose is to provide meaningful access to justice for everyone who enters our courthouse doors, regardless of age, social status, heritage or gender identity. Judges across the State stress that lack of childcare support is an overwhelming issue faced by litigants, particularly women, who must bring children to court with them or miss proceedings altogether.



The Children’s Centers facilitate that mission by making it possible for —and practical for— some families and individuals to come to court, to obtain the relief that they may desperately need.

There are approximately 30 Children’s Centers around the State, but it’s not enough. With financial support provided by Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature, the Court System is pursuing its goal of having at least one Children’s Center in each of New York’s 62 counties.



Judge Mary Porter does final paperwork on the adoption of a child in her Family Court chambers

Encouraging Innovation

Thinking Outside the Box



“We have made considerable progress but I recognize we have a long way to go, and that we will never get there, because the most wonderful thing about imagination is that it never runs out”

Chief Judge Rowan D. Wilson

Sometimes our judges identify a problem or need in their locality, and create an initiative to address it. The UCS administration encourages that type of innovative, outside-the-box thinking.

For example, Judge Fernando Camacho, now an Acting Supreme Court Justice in Suffolk County, saw a need for a specialized part addressing the needs of sexually exploited youth. So, he created the ERIN Court, the first court in the State to provide support and services for sexually exploited youth, many of them in foster care. That purely local initiative expanded statewide and inspired the establishment of Human Trafficking Courts.



Similarly, in 2017 Judge Andra Ackerman, then in Cohoes City Court and now an Acting Supreme Court Justice in Albany, sought a way to help the struggling youth she saw in her court day in and day out – directionless young people committing an escalating series of crimes. They lacked a positive role model and were unlikely to succeed on probation without help. U-CAN, the first court-based mentoring program in the State, was born of necessity. It is spreading to courts across the State.

Hon. Fernando Camacho | ERIN Court



“...the same vacant expression I had seen on the faces of countless teenagers over the years, I’d had enough”

Forty years ago, the Court System was deaf to the cries and suffering of commercially sexually exploited persons.

In 1985, when I joined the Manhattan DA’s Office, one of my first assignments was the midnight arraignment shift. At two in the morning, those arrested for prostitution would walk out of the holding pens after spending two days in pre-arraignment detention. I, as the prosecutor, would ask for 20 days in jail, the Legal Aid attorney would ask for 10 days, and after a guilty plea, the sentence was 15 days. They’d do their time in a suffocating jail cell, and it was just a matter of time before they were back in court.

Same charge. Same result.

Back then, none of us in the legal system understood that most of the individuals arrested for prostitution were trafficking victims, totally controlled by a trafficker who held some kind of power over them. Sometimes, the trafficker would get the victim addicted to drugs, and exploit that addiction to force them to sell their bodies. Other times, the trafficker would take in a runaway or throwaway (discarded by their caregiver) and, after gaining their trust, force them into sex trafficking.

They would get the victim to share confidences or information about their families, and then blackmail them. Many of the “prostitutes” were minors, children.

In 1997, as a judge in Brooklyn Criminal Court, the same script was repeated and I played my part: “The Court’s sentence is 15 days in jail.”

But by 2003, when a 16-year-old runaway was brought before me in my Queens County courtroom, wearing handcuffs and the same vacant expression I had seen on the faces of countless teenagers over the years, I’d had enough. That was the day I stopped playing the game. Instead of viewing these kids and young adults as criminals and sending them to jail, I would view them as the victims they were and connected them with organizations providing support and services to sex-trafficking victims. What started as a local initiative to address a tragedy I was witnessing in my court eventually expanded statewide.

In 2024, while serving as a Family Court judge, I launched the first Family Court-based Human



Trafficking Court in the State to provide services and safety planning for young trafficking victims in the Suffolk County Family Court. I named it the “ERIN Court” (Expedient Resource Intervention Network) in memory of a young trafficking victim who was beaten to death on a blustery winter night and dumped in a train yard.

Although I have moved on to other judicial assignments as an Acting Supreme Court Justice, the ERIN Court continues under the visionary leadership of my colleague, the Hon. Mary E. Porter, a Family Court Judge in Suffolk County.



Hon. Mary E. Porter | Suffolk County Family Court



“But as the hearing unfolded, it became painfully clear that our ‘usual’ court responses and standard neglect services were woefully inadequate.”

A few months before the ERIN Court began, I received a neglect petition filed against the parent of a persistent runaway. Although the legal mechanism bringing the case before the court was parental neglect, it became clear during the initial emergency conference and hearing that the real story was far more complex. Beneath the surface of the petition were serious concerns that this young child had been exploited by one or more sex traffickers.

I met her for the first time that day in the courtroom. She was small and nervous. She looked every bit her young 14 years but testified with composed determination. During that proceeding, she told me pieces of her short life: the transience, the abandonment, the instability, and the abuse. Yet, what struck me most wasn't her pain—it was her strength. She had survived unimaginable circumstances and still sat there, steady and unflinching. She was not waiting to be rescued.

But as the hearing unfolded, it became painfully that the existing systems simply weren't built for children like her—for those whose trauma, exploitation, and survival were woven together in ways that no single agency or service could untangle alone.

In that moment, one thought consumed me: How can I help?

I ran straight to Judge Camacho, seeking his advice. When I learned about the creation of the ERIN Court—a specialized court designed for children who had been trafficked or were at risk—I knew I had to be part of it. I was eager to contribute to something that could meet these children where they were.

No matter how they arrive, the ERIN Court is the same — a coordinated, multidisciplinary effort to address the full scope of their needs. The court brings together the child, family, attorneys, service providers, and advocates to identify resources, develop strategies, and, above all, create a path toward safety, stability, and healing.

Traffickers lure children with the illusion of safety, with food, money, attention, or love—things the child may not have access to at home. Other times, they use drugs, violence, or fear to trap them. The exploitation is relentless. The children are used over and over again.

Recovery from that kind of trauma is neither quick nor linear. Trust builds slowly, and setbacks are common. Survivors may relapse, run away, lash out, or self-destruct before they begin to heal. But through ERIN Court's collaboration and compassion, we have already seen transformation. In the short time since its creation, children have graduated from high school, reunited with their families, maintained sobriety, and started down paths toward independent living.

As one of our program partners reflected:



“Through the collaboration of professionals at ERIN Court, [our client] was referred to programs that helped address her mental health, substance use, vocational goals, and even a creative outlet. She has continued her sobriety, improved familial relationships, and excelled in school—her teachers have even remarked on her exceptional writing. She has a bright future ahead of her.”

Stephanie Muller, LMSW
Program Supervisor,
EAC Network Safe Harbour

Those words capture what I have witnessed firsthand—the power of coordination, compassion, and persistence. For me, that first child's case was more than an introduction to ERIN Court. It was a reminder that, while we cannot undo the past, we can create spaces where healing becomes possible, one child at a time.



Hon. Andra Ackerman | U-CAN Court



“We were warned to expect a failure rate of 80 percent; instead, we have a success rate of approximately 80 percent.”

Every day as a new judge in 2016 I'd see a parade of young people who touched my heart. They were struggling, with no direction, lacking anything resembling a positive role model, and following a path that I knew would lead them to one of two places: state prison or the cemetery. When I looked into their eyes, I saw fear, hopelessness, desperation and resignation.

And I saw myself.

My own childhood was a story of trauma and struggle; I grew up in a series of foster homes.

Why, I kept asking myself, am I up here on the bench? And why, I'd wonder, are they standing before me? Our stories are not much different. I'm not “better” than they are. So, what's the difference?

The difference was that at critical junctures in my life, there were people who took an interest in me and helped me find my way when I'd strayed, people I could talk to, people who cared.

Mentors.

I wanted to replicate that for the young people in my court. I came up with an idea for a court-based mentoring program. My colleague, John Caher, who had been hired by the Chief Judge as an “idea person” and tasked with “making things happen,” helped me create and implement it. We called it U-CAN.

When I get overwhelmed with my caseload or saddened by the parade of human tragedy that sometimes awaits me in Albany County Court, I think of the many, many heartwarming U-CAN success stories, and I smile.

I often think of Anthony, a young man who would be in state prison right now but found his way with the help of an incredible mentor. Today, Anthony is a United States Marine and looking forward to a future career with the New York State Police.

And I think of Jared.

Jared was less than cooperative. Each and every time he failed to do what I demanded—such as meet with his mentor—there was a consequence. On seven separate occasions, I remanded him to the county jail for a night or weekend.

At long last, and with the help of his mentor, Jared woke up and took the program and his life seriously. His conduct from then on was perfect. He graduated with flying colors and ever since has been working, paying taxes and building the life I knew was possible for him.

Last summer, Jared invited me to his wedding, which I happily attended.



He gave me a big hug and a bigger smile and thanked me for holding his feet to the fire and refusing to give up on him. He told me U-CAN and his mentor are the reasons he's where he is today, rather than behind bars. It was one of my happiest moments as a judge.

Over the years, U-CAN slowly spread across the State, largely with the help of John Caher and Bridget McAvoy, also of OCA. In 2025, Chief Judge Wilson, a great supporter of restorative justice, created a statewide U-CAN coordinator position and we hired Brad DiPietro, an expert on mentoring, to fill that spot. With Brad on board and running full speed, U-CAN is already spreading.

I am eager to hear other judges tell their own success stories, and can't wait to see the smiles on their faces when they share those stories with me!





Solving Problems Across the Spectrum

All Courts are Problem Solvers



“We feel that New York is the center for excellence in business litigation and dispute resolution. I think that people all over the world recognize that.”

Kathryn Wylde

President and CEO, Partnership for New York City

People and institutions — schools, churches, corporations, small businesses, etc. — also come to us for problem-solving, and we are proud of the way in which we address myriad problems in myriad creative ways. An example is the Commercial Division of State Supreme Court.



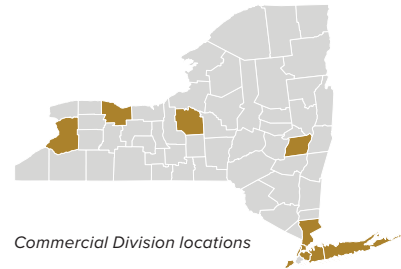
In the mid-1990s, then-Chief Judge Judith S. Kaye, a former commercial litigator, recognized the need for a specialty court geared specifically to complex business disputes. Renowned as one of the world’s most efficient venues for the resolution of commercial disputes and located in the world’s leading financial center, the Commercial Division is available to businesses of all sizes, both inside and outside the State of New York. The Commercial Division has addressed what had been a pressing need for a forum where businesses could litigate their most complex matters before a specially trained judge and obtain a predictable and prompt resolution.

Heather Mulligan | Business Council of New York State



“The Commercial Division has made extraordinary efforts to improve the litigation process and companies generally regard those efforts as extremely successful”

Litigation in the Commercial Division is generally as predictable as litigation can be for two reasons: (1) New York has a well-developed and logical body of commercial law and (2) the Judges in the Commercial Division have substantial commercial expertise.



Commercial Division locations

Businesses generally try to avoid litigation whenever possible because of its cost and risk. Most businesses are also deeply concerned about diverting the time and attention of their employees from their regular duties whenever they are involved in litigation. Thus, businesses generally regard litigation as an unattractive option which they will pursue only when no other alternative will adequately protect their rights and interests.

Unfortunately, the potential disadvantages of the litigation process can be exacerbated in some circumstances. From a more positive perspective, the litigation process can be at least somewhat improved when the courts make efforts to do so. The Commercial Division of the New York State Supreme Court has made extraordinary efforts to improve the litigation process and companies generally regard those efforts as extremely successful.

One of the most important goals of any litigation process is that the outcome be predictable. There will always be some degree of risk and uncertainty in litigation but the goal of the process should be to make the result as predictable as possible so that companies considering business transactions and initiatives can evaluate the litigation risk.

More particularly, Commercial Division Judges are familiar with complex contract concepts, securities, and business organizations, and have a sophisticated understanding of globalization, international trade, and applying laws of foreign jurisdictions, when required. In addition, the Commercial Division has responsible and responsive Judges and court staff who apply procedural rules and substantive law consistently and fairly.

The decisions of Commercial Division Judges are generally well-reasoned and provide useful guidance to businesses in conducting their legal affairs. For these reasons, businesses in New York can often predict the legal consequences of their business decisions and thereby avoid having to go to court.

A second important goal for any litigation process is that it be efficient, cost-effective, and businesslike.

Here again the Commercial Division has made extraordinary efforts to respond to the concerns and needs of businesses and those efforts have been highly successful. The Commercial Division has adopted many new rules and procedures to facilitate efficient resolution of disputes and to avoid wasting the time of participants in the litigation

process. The commercial expertise of the Commercial Division Judges enables them to focus quickly on the important issues in a business dispute without wasting time on irrelevant or marginal issues. In addition, the Commercial Division encourages proportionality and rationality in discovery procedures and in resolution of discovery disputes so the parties do not waste time and money on discovery, which is often the most expensive component of commercial litigation.

The Commercial Division Judges are proactive and hands-on in managing cases. They encourage and facilitate settlements. The Commercial Division helps businesses resolve their disputes quickly and cost-effectively so they can get on with their business and avoid getting bogged down in litigation quagmires.

The Commercial Division enables businesses to operate more efficiently and productively by reducing the amount of time and money they are required to devote to dispute resolution. As a result, businesses operate more profitably to the benefit of their employees, communities, and shareholders, and ultimately to the benefit of all New Yorkers.





Solving Problems Regionally

Seeing Both the Forest and Trees of New York State



“When students hear from a judge or lawyer who grew up in the same or similar circumstances, they are more likely to believe that a career in the law is attainable.”

Hon. Dianne T. Renwick
Presiding Justice, First Department

Although our problem-solving courts generally function on a local, trial court level, the four regional Departments of the Appellate Division of State Supreme Court address vital needs, often creatively, within their broad geographic jurisdiction. The four Departments — two in the New York City region and one each in the Capital Region and Western New York — provide critical services, typically at an arm’s length from the courts’ better-known role in reviewing the decisions of the trial court judges.

For instance, all four Departments manage and maintain Attorneys for Children programs that provide legal services to children in Family Court proceedings and Supreme Court custody matters. Over a thousand attorneys in private practice are appointed in the various Departments to represent children. They provide legal representation to ensure that the child’s wishes and interests are heard in court.

Similarly, each Department oversees Mental Hygiene Legal Services, which provides free legal services to people with mental disabilities, advocating for the rights of individuals in facilities for mental illness, developmental disabilities, and chemical dependence. They ensure quality of care and offer legal guidance in guardianship proceedings.

The four Presiding Justices (one in each Department) often react to problems on a regional level. For instance, in 2025 the Hon. Elizabeth Garry, Presiding Justice of the Third Department, spearheaded a novel program to address a serious shortage of attorneys in rural areas (the 28-county Department includes some of the most rural portions of the State). That program, Rural Pathways, offered summer placements in remote areas for law students to provide the future lawyer with an up-close look at legal practice outside the metropolitan areas.



Hon. Dianne T. Renwick | Presiding Justice, First Department



“Many students leave our programs feeling inspired by new possibilities.”

The Appellate Division, First Department, exercises jurisdiction over Bronx and New York counties. Despite its relatively small geographic size, these two counties are among the most populous and diverse, where hundreds of languages are spoken in neighborhoods steeped in distinctive cultural traditions. It is a region full of contrasts.

Manhattan is home to elite schools, universities and businesses with global reputations, yet 26% of Bronx residents live below the federal poverty line—nearly twice the national poverty rate and the highest percentage of New York City’s five boroughs. Few lawyers come from these communities. Far too many public-school students in the Bronx and Manhattan do not see themselves entering the legal field or other professions.

To help address this, the First Department launched the Foundations of Justice Committee’s Justice Forward Initiative, a civics education program. By inviting middle and high school students into the courthouse, we aim to



expand their understanding of our government, the legal system, and careers in the courts and legal profession. We have reached hundreds of students through our annual Law Day Program and monthly Class Visits Program.

When students hear from a judge or lawyer who grew up in the same neighborhoods and in similar circumstances—they are more likely to believe that a career in the law is attainable. Many students leave our programs feeling inspired by new possibilities. As one student commented, “I liked how we were able to talk to the Judges and how they taught us a few things about themselves.” Another wrote, “[I] hope you get to inspire others like me to become a lawyer.”

We have continued to expand the reach of the Justice Forward Initiative by inviting students from law schools in the First Department to hear from Justices about their paths to the bench and career options.

The Foundations of Justice Committee’s Justice Forward Initiative continues to strive to



empower students through civic engagement and expand their knowledge of opportunities within the legal profession.

Additionally, in 2026, the Court will welcome its first Hon. Harold A. Stevens fellows. The fellowship was created to honor former Presiding Justice Harold A. Stevens, a veteran of World War II, and the first Black jurist to serve on the First Department and New York State Court of Appeals, who believed that the law is an instrument of change. To fulfill Judge Stevens’ vision, the eponymous fellowship is our promise to train future generations of lawyers and inspire them to lead a life of service.



Hon. Hector D. LaSalle | Presiding Justice, Second Department



The Mental Hygiene Legal Service (MHLS) of the Second Department provides legal assistance to over 9,000 New Yorkers annually. MHLS is the oldest legal advocacy program in the United States for mentally disabled individuals, and its mandate has greatly expanded over the past seven decades. On a daily basis, MHLS comes in direct contact with many of the 26,000 individuals falling under MHLS's mandate.

While MHLS is most known for its high-volume litigation to protect the due process rights of those involuntarily hospitalized seeking discharge as well as those seeking to refuse medications, its mandate is vast.

MHLS safeguards the residents of group homes operated by the Office for People with Developmental



“For individuals facing end-of-life decisions, MHLS sees they are treated with dignity and respect in their final days.”

Disabilities, ensuring they are free from abuse and neglect and afforded the ability to integrate into their communities.

MHLS ensures the elderly and developmentally disabled have a voice regarding their autonomy in MHL 81 and SCPA 17-A Guardianships and Surrogate Decision-Making Committee matters.

MHLS follows clients transferred to nursing homes, ensuring they are not ignored or overlooked.

For individuals facing end-of-life decisions, MHLS sees they are treated with dignity and respect in their final days.

When it comes to services in the community, MHLS promotes the least restrictive alternative for clients facing Assisted Outpatient Treatment under MHL 9.60.



Incarcerated individuals in Office of Mental Health satellite units and those facing civil confinement pursuant to MHL Article 10 are under the watchful eye of MHLS. The Special Litigation and Appeals Unit of MHLS makes precedent setting caselaw.

MHLS ensures New York's most vulnerable residents are afforded equal access to justice in the courts.



Hon. Elizabeth A. Garry | Presiding Justice, Third Department



“An agreed upon resolution can restore peaceful co-existence...Participants frequently express immense relief that this time of major challenge has, finally, passed.”

Litigation is an expensive and emotionally draining process for parties, and particularly when matters continue into the appeals process. It is common for parties to think that their dispute cannot be settled and that the dark cloud of litigation must continue to hang over them.

The Civil Appeals Settlement Program (CASP), an auxiliary department within the Appellate Division, provides an effective exit ramp from the expensive litigation path. The program is highly successful and well regarded among litigants and their attorneys, in some large part because the Third Department has multiple experienced retired judges who are willing to serve as settlement officers.

During conferences, the settlement officers provide objective evaluations of the strengths and weaknesses of each side, drawing on their experience in private practice and on the trial and appellate courts, and they encourage the parties and their counsel to consider solutions, sometimes creative solutions. Attorneys have described our officers as “outstanding” and “patient,” noting that they offer “reality-based suggestions that are fair to both parties” and that they “really listen” to the parties.

Even some matters that might seem impossible to resolve—such as property-line disputes—have settled. In these cases, the parties have lived in constant tension throughout their litigation, with antagonistic behavior escalating to the point that their homes no longer provide peace, but instead become places of hostility. An agreed upon resolution can restore peaceful co-existence. More broadly, participants frequently express



immense relief that this time of major challenge has, finally, passed. In sum, the Third Department’s CASP, through its exceptional settlement officers, delivers a level of peace of mind and satisfaction that many parties never thought possible, through settlements. We are grateful to our officers and CASP staff, who provide an excellent service to parties with matters before our Court.



Hon. Gerald J. Whalen | Presiding Justice, Fourth Department



“By building partnerships with local public schools at every level, the Fourth Department has created clear routes for students...to careers in the courts.”

In the Fourth Department, we aspire to have the diverse demographics of our region more fully represented among our court attorneys and staff. By building partnerships with local public schools at every level, the Fourth Department has created clear routes for students in the Fourth Department to careers in the courts.

In 2023, the Fourth Department’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee assembled mock trial teams at two Rochester City high schools. Now in its third year, this program provides equitable opportunities for Rochester City School District students to participate in mock trial tournaments and experience legal proceedings, similar to their suburban counterparts. Coached by Fourth

Department Associate Justice Stephen Lindley and Fourth Department attorneys and staff, the teams are the only two in the Rochester City School system to compete each year in the New York State Bar Association’s annual mock trial competition. Last year, one of the teams advanced to the Monroe County finals. In 2024, the Fourth Department expanded its efforts to working with Rochester City middle school students with the goal of piquing their interest in the law at an even earlier age.

The Fourth Department also hosts an annual New York Youth Law Academy, now in its second year, through which local high school students participate in interactive summer programs held at the University of Rochester and SUNY Buffalo. The programs include seminars by local judges and legal practitioners, and they are designed to encourage students to consider careers in the legal field while introducing them to life in a college setting.



Through these programs, in addition to individual internships for college and law school students provided through the court system’s Office for Justice Initiatives, the Fourth Department has now created a pathway capable of guiding local public school students from middle school, high school, college, and law school to future careers in the court system for years to come.





Coordinating Justice

Collaboration Across Courts and Agencies



"I am extremely honored to serve. In fact, when people refer to me as 'Your Honor,' I often respond, 'No, it's my honor.' When we fulfill this mission, we engage in some of the most meaningful and transformative work any court can do, and it is truly my honor."

Hon. Jeffrey S. Sunshine
Statewide Coordinating Judge for Matrimonial Matters



The Unified Court System utilizes three Statewide Coordinating Judges for specific areas of need: The Hon. Richard Rivera is Statewide Coordinating Judge for Family Court Matters; the Hon. Jeffrey S. Sunshine is Statewide Coordinating Judge for Matrimonial Matters; and the Hon. Debra J. Young is Statewide Coordinating Judge for Problem-Solving Courts.

Judges Sunshine, Rivera, and Young serve as resources for the judges in the trial courts and liaisons between the Third Branch and outside stakeholders, including advocacy groups. Their leadership helps ensure that the administration is informed by and responsive to the needs of the community. Coordinated leadership is crucial to making certain that like cases are handled alike, regardless of geography. At the same time, close connections with the judges "in the trenches" enables the UCS to understand regional dynamics and strike an important balance between standardization and regimentation. At the end of the day, the goals are consistency, fairness, and statewide innovation.

Hon. Richard Rivera Statewide Coordinating Judge for Family Matters



“The difficult situations that we handle in Family Court often connect us to individuals at the lowest points in their lives.”

During his 2025 State of the Judiciary address, Chief Judge Rowan D. Wilson focused on the courts as problem solvers, entities that make a very real, tangible and often life-altering difference in the lives of real people. That is exactly what our Family Courts are tasked with doing on a regular basis throughout this State.

Daily, our Family Courts are filled with people seeking assistance when there is no other option, for example with a youth facing unmanageable behaviors at home or committing acts of delinquency in the community, for conflicts regarding the custody and care of their children, for protection from domestic violence, when struggling with a mental health or substance use disorder or facing some other obstacle to a healthy and safe home environment and unfortunately at times, the abuse of a child. Our Family Courts must decide on these issues constantly—decisions that will lead to those “real, tangible and often life-altering” differences in people’s lives that our Chief spoke of.

I have spent the majority of my career in Family Court, representing clients on matters involving domestic violence, custody and visitation, abuse and neglect charges, and matters of paternity and support. I served as an Assistant County Attorney handling

juvenile delinquency matters, and as an Attorney for the Child representing children in all the matters listed above. I am a former Child Support Magistrate, and Family Court Judge and I now serve as the Statewide Coordinating Judge for Family Court Matters.

The challenges that people face in our Family Courts are not unfamiliar to me. I was born and raised in the Bronx, by loving, caring and hardworking parents. They came to New York from Puerto Rico and spoke limited English. We lived in low-income housing, and I witnessed some of the worst aspects of growing up in poverty. I am grateful for the experiences I had as they have instilled in me compassion and empathy for the people we serve.

As both a judge and practicing attorney, I always felt the responsibility and desire to provide the best assistance to these families and individuals. I have tried to keep at the forefront of my mind the premise that everyone deserves good outcomes and healthy outcomes for themselves, for their

loved ones and for their children. The difficult situations that we handle in Family Court often connect us to individuals at the lowest points in their lives. Having that connection to families has given me, as a jurist, the opportunity to see how to best support families, how to best support children, and how to come alongside families to help encourage and strengthen them and thereby strengthen communities.

As the Statewide Coordinating Judge for Family Court Matters, I have the opportunity to guide the Family Courts across the State to strengthen our courts and better aid our families in dealing with these challenging, difficult, and even crisis situations that they face. I have been given a broader platform to help make our courts more accessible, to strengthen and expand programs that are helping families and youth, and to help ensure that our courts and judges are operating pursuant to consistent protocols and processes, all in an effort to provide equal access to justice to all and to make a positive change in their lives.



Hon. Jeffrey S. Sunshine Statewide Coordinating Judge for Matrimonial Matters



When I walk into a courtroom, I never forget that what happens there may alter the course of someone's life forever. Divorce is not just a case type, it is a profound moment of reckoning. A marriage is ending, but a family must find their new beginning. They come to what I refer to as a "stranger in black robes" to make decisions when they themselves cannot or, even more importantly, help them come to an agreement so they can resolve their issues amicably. The role of a judge in a matrimonial case is to guide people through that process in a way that is not only legally sound, but humane, dignified, and, wherever possible, transformative.

As the Statewide Coordinating Judge for Matrimonial Matters, my mission is to ensure that matrimonial cases across New York State become more than just venues for legal dispute resolution. We are, at our core, problem-solvers in the truest sense. In appropriate cases, we help people agree to the utilization of alternate dispute resolution as a means to resolve their cases. If they do not resolve them in mediation, then by court intervention through settlement conferences or, ultimately, by decision after trial.

We disentangle finances, shape parenting plans putting children first, and, perhaps most importantly, create a path forward that allows them to leave the courthouse not just divorced, but able to function as

"When people refer to me as 'Your Honor,' I often respond, 'No, it's my honor.'"

a family in a different form with their dignity intact. When a case ends, I often remind parents that if they come to a fork in the road about what the proper decision is for their child, choosing the fork that is in the child's best interest as opposed to their own will most likely always be the right decision.

Statewide coordination and judicial education are key to making that vision possible. It ensures that a litigant in our large urban centers experiences the same accessibility to fairness and clarity as a litigant in rural communities throughout our State, while being respectful of local needs, resources, and practices. It allows us to suggest court rules where appropriate and to recommend legislative reforms.

Coordination and utilization of the new joint uncontested divorce process also fosters innovation, simplifying uncontested divorce forms, expanding mediation and other ADR programs, and, when appropriate, promoting parent education programs. Providing resources for self-represented litigants using plain-language forms and instructions and providing interpreter services where appropriate promotes access.

Continuous judicial and legal education for judges and lawyers are necessary components of statewide coordination.

We also embrace the benefits of electronic filing, virtual proceedings, and courtroom modernization.

These are exciting times to be the Statewide Coordinating Judge for Matrimonial Matters. At their best, matrimonial proceedings are a place where lives can reset and where people can emerge from crisis with their dignity intact and their future still within reach, or even better, quickly come to a resolution through a joint uncontested divorce.

That is the reason I am so deeply committed to this work. When we solve problems in a divorce proceeding with compassion, we do more than issue judgments and orders, we restore stability, protect children, and give people a chance to move on with their lives. I am extremely honored to serve. In fact, when people refer to me as "Your Honor," I often respond, "No, it's my honor." When we fulfill this mission, we engage in some of the most meaningful and transformative work any court can do, and it is truly my honor.



Hon. Debra J. Young Statewide Coordinating Judge for Problem-Solving Courts



Since the late 1990s, New York has been a national leader in the development and expansion of problem-solving courts. As societal challenges evolve, so too does our Court System as it continues to forge innovative pathways that prioritize accountability, rehabilitation, and long-term public safety over punishment alone.

Today, New York State's network of problem-solving courts (PSCs) includes judicial diversion courts, alternatives to incarceration programs, opioid intervention courts, human trafficking intervention courts, and specialized courts for individuals with mental health issues and veterans. These courts are designed to address the underlying causes of criminal behavior, substance use disorders, trauma, and mental illness, by offering participants a structured path to recovery and reintegration.

What makes treatment courts effective is their holistic approach. Participants who plead guilty agree to strict conditions: maintaining sobriety, staying arrest-free, undergoing regular drug testing, and engaging in intensive treatment. Throughout this journey, they appear regularly before specially trained judges who offer not just supervision, but genuine encouragement and support. It is this combination of structure, accountability, and

“What makes treatment courts effective is their holistic approach.”

compassion that gives individuals a meaningful second chance to heal, to grow, and to contribute once again to their communities.

A defining strength of our problem-solving courts is their interdisciplinary model. Unlike traditional courts, where agencies operate independently with limited communication, PSCs rely on cohesive collaboration among judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, probation officers, treatment providers, and community-based resources. Regular team meetings ensure that every team member shares a unified understanding of each participant's progress and treatment needs. This team-based approach promotes informed decision-making and supports successful outcomes.

Throughout my travels to treatment courts across New York State, I've seen firsthand the strength and impact of these programs. Whether in urban, suburban, or rural communities, many of the challenges we face—be they substance use, mental health disorders, domestic violence, and

human trafficking, are universal. At the same time, persistent issues like lack of housing and transportation continues to affect justice-involved individuals statewide.

The success of our treatment courts is reflected not only in the data, but in the lives changed. To date, over 73,000 individuals have graduated from New York's treatment courts. We currently serve nearly 6,000 active participants. Among the most powerful outcomes: more than 1,000 drug-free babies have been born to parents engaged in these life-changing programs.

This work is also personal to me. Growing up with a brother with developmental disabilities, I was drawn early to a career centered on helping others. When I sit in a treatment court and look into the eyes of the participants before me, I often see my brother and I strive to treat them with the same dignity, compassion, and fairness I would want for him. This perspective guides my approach and deepens my commitment to the mission of our courts.







Chief Administrative Judge Joseph A. Zayas celebrated Law Day at the Court of Appeals in Albany



Westchester County Surrogate's Court Help Center grand opening

Access to Justice & Equal Justice

Judicial Pillars of Public Trust and Confidence



“When you talk about what makes me unhappy, it’s injustice. And I think not having an attorney represent you in a way that gets you the outcome that you deserve is unfair. I want to be part of the solution.”

Hon. Christina Ryba

Co-chair, Permanent Commission on Access to Justice

The UCS remains unwaveringly committed to the fair and efficient administration of justice for every person, in every court, across the state—regardless of background, ability, or circumstance. Two guiding principles are at the core of this mission: access to justice and equal justice. Both are essential to the UCS’ problem-solving ethos and promote a court system that engages individuals in a dignified and meaningful way.



Providing meaningful access to, and equal justice for, every person who enters and serves in New York’s courts remains a priority of the Unified Court System and its Office for Justice Initiatives. The Court System utilizes a collaborative framework that is designed to enhance access and dismantle bias.



Access to Justice Division

Each year, thousands of people navigate courts throughout the State without the benefit of legal representation. The Office for Justice Initiatives' Access to Justice Division advances equal access to justice in all New York State Courts for people of all backgrounds, incomes, and abilities by developing, implementing, and supporting pro bono programs, self-help services, technological tools, and more. Below is a summary of the Access to Justice Division's projects and initiatives that foster an equitable court system and minimize barriers to participation.



DIY (Do-It-Yourself) Programs

Unrepresented litigants can generate forms using a guided question-and-answer process. This document assembly tool simplifies the process for litigants by asking targeted questions to help the court receive relevant information needed to process the paperwork. Each form packet includes step-by-step filing instructions and additional information.

CourtHelp

CourtHelp is a publicly accessible website designed to provide unrepresented court users with information about the law and court procedure. It also serves as an access point for court services such as Ask A Law Librarian and local ADA information.

Volunteer Programs

The Access to Justice Division works closely with local courts, legal services organizations, bar associations, the private bar, and undergraduate/graduate schools to develop and implement volunteer programs, including:

- **The Attorney Emeritus Program (AEP)**, co-administered with the Feerick Center for Social Justice at Fordham Law, connects attorneys who are 55 and older plus with pro bono civil legal service opportunities with registered volunteer host organizations.
- **The Consumer Debt Volunteer Lawyer for the Day Program**, available throughout New York City, provides pro bono limited-scope legal representation to unrepresented defendants in consumer debt cases.
- **The Court Navigator Program** recruits, trains, and assigns trained community members to provide unrepresented court users with general information, written materials, and one-on-one assistance, including moral support and wayfinding services. In 2025, the program expanded to the NYC Family Court, NY County.
- **The Uncontested Divorce Volunteer Lawyer Program (Kings County)** recruits, trains, and supervises volunteer attorneys to provide unrepresented litigants with legal advice and document preparation. It is available in collaboration with the City Bar Justice Center.
- **The Supreme Court Matrimonial Center (Albany County)**, which provides limited scope in-person or virtual consultations regarding contested matrimonial actions.
- **The Foreclosure Volunteer Lawyer for the Day Program** provides limited scope advocacy for unrepresented court users in Westchester County. Referrals to the program are made by the Supreme Court Help Center, Public Access Law Library, and the Civil Calendar Office.
- **The GAL (Guardian Ad Litem) Housing Program**, which recruits, trains, and provides NYC Housing Court Judges and Judges presiding over housing matters in Westchester County with a pool of GALs to safeguard the rights and reduce the eviction rate of tenants unable to advocate for themselves due to age or mental health-related challenges.
- **The NYC Family Court Volunteer Attorney Program**, which provides free online and phone consultations to unrepresented litigants on custody/visitation, support, paternity, guardianship, and/or family offense matters.

Virtual Court Access Networks

VCAN sites provide court users with access to a range of resources, such as legal information, electronic filing, live connections with court staff, and virtual proceedings with technological equipment provided by the UCS. VCAN sites meet people where they are, reducing the need for court users to travel to court. They are available in partnership with local courts and community organizations.

Help Centers

Help Centers are neutral locations staffed by court employees where unrepresented court users can obtain information about the law and court procedure, forms and publications, and referrals to court provided resources, bar associations, and community services.



Permanent Commission on Access to Justice

Closing the “justice gap” — the elusive goal of the original Task Force to Expand Access to Legal Services throughout the State and the continuing mandate of the Permanent Commission on Access to Justice — requires innovative and creative solutions, especially with the expansion of legal roles. During 2025, four principal Working Groups focused on housing, rural justice, technology, and expanding the categories of legal professionals beyond lawyers who can provide legal assistance.

Going forward, the Commission is committed to expanding the impact of its work, with the aim of coordinating and collaborating with the Court System and key stakeholders, including court users, to amplify the Commission’s initiatives and to continue to support and promote implementation of its recommendations. It looks ahead to strengthening and expanding the solid foundation and innumerable successes over the past 16 years, including the creation of a stable State funding stream for legal services, and thoughtful, cutting-edge recommendations for the Court System and other stakeholders to help close the justice chasm.

In 2025, the Permanent Commission welcomed a new co-chair, the Honorable Seth M. Marnin, and in December, a new Executive Director, Molly Burke, Esq. joined. The Permanent Commission was also supported by the continued service of its existing leadership in the Honorable Christina L. Ryba and Janet Sabel, Esq.

The Commission’s Working Groups will continue to play a vital role in developing recommendations that emerge from the members’ own experiences and from their study and exploration of access to justice initiatives developed and proposed around the State and across the country.

Judiciary Civil Legal Services

The Judiciary Civil Legal Services (JCLS) unit provides programmatic leadership and oversight of the JCLS grantmaking process, which funds legal services organizations who provide representation and legal counseling for low-income New Yorkers facing issues affecting “essentials of life,” such as housing instability, including evictions and foreclosures; consumer and medical debt; food insecurity; elder abuse and domestic violence; immigration concerns; and Family Court involvement. JCLS funding was increased to \$150 million in 2025, a significant commitment that promotes meaningful access to the courts.





Zenith T. Taylor, Esq., Statewide Civic Engagement Coordinator, led the Second Annual MLK Day of Service at Queens Civil Court

Community Outreach & Civic Education

Building Stronger Relationships with Our Community



“I believe that I’m making a difference in helping others to understand and learn about their government so that they can be a part of their government. Many people don’t understand that we have a self-governing democracy and their vote, their activity, their participation matters.”

Zenith T. Taylor, Esq.
Statewide Civic Engagement Coordinator

The UCS is committed to transparency. A robust team of communications professionals utilizes both traditional and social media in a continuous effort to share our story with the public and provide information to which the people are entitled.



With the modern avalanche of information from legacy media, social media, alternative media, etc. it takes a diligent and constant effort to be sure the news we generate does not get lost in the shuffle. It’s not enough to simply put out a press release and hope someone picks it up. In the current information age, that requires building relationships with the media and understanding which outlets are interested in what type of stories.



Media Outreach

In 2025, our outreach, essays, and social media engagement highlighted successes of our extraordinary Judges and workforce. Stories chronicling their work appeared in myriad, diverse publications and television markets across the State. We showcased:

- Chief Judge Rowan Wilson in an insightful look at the man behind the robes.
- Hon. Debra Young, Statewide Coordinating Judge for Problem-Solving Courts, shared her vision for restorative justice.
- Hon. Raymond Fernandez's inspiring story making the unlikely journey from a homeless shelter to State Supreme Court.
- Zenith Taylor's new role as Statewide Civic Engagement Coordinator.
- Karlene Dennis, the new head of the Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission.
- Tony Walters, Director of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

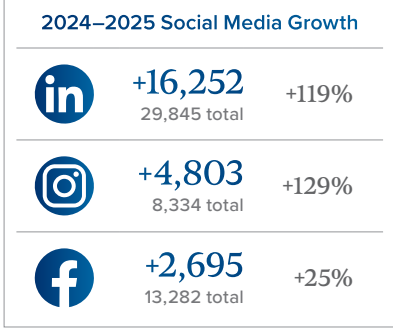
Social Media and Internal Communications

With a large workforce spread throughout the State, internal communications is crucial. On our Inside UCS site — accessible throughout our system — the number of posts annually has increased from 11 in 2015 to 232 in 2025.

We maintain a strong and vibrant social media presence, utilizing Facebook, X, Instagram, Blue Sky, LinkedIn, and YouTube to ensure our message reaches the largest possible audience. Our podcast program, Amici, appears on SoundCloud, iTunes, and Stitcher. In 2025, our podcasts were played more than 7,000 times.

Photography

Until recently, the Third Branch of government had never had a fulltime professional photographer to capture, for both immediate use and posterity, the momentous and sometimes historic events that engage our judges and staff. Now, utilizing both staff photographers and a stable of freelancers across the State, we are able to visually memorialize events in every portion of the State. The images in this annual report, representing only a tiny portion of our photographic portfolio, is testament to the artistic and creative skill of our team.





New York State Fair

Attendance at the fair this year exceeded 925,000—an increase of 57,000 over 2024. And thanks to our dedicated counters, we know that at least 22,500 visitors stopped by the UCS booth. This was truly a team effort, and one we can all be proud of.

UCS Leadership Team

2025 New York State Fair “Thank You” letter

After an absence of nearly 20 years from the New York State Fair, the Unified Court System returned to Syracuse in 2024, staffing a large booth that provided visitors with information about the Third Branch of government and encouraged citizens to volunteer for jury service and consider career opportunities in the courts.

At our encore performance in 2025, at least 22,500 visitors stopped by our booth (up from 21,500 in 2024) and 935 New Yorkers volunteered for jury duty, a 45% increase.



More than 150 staff, representing every Judicial District and OCA, came together with a shared purpose: to connect with the communities that we serve. The Fair gave us an opportunity to engage with the public — answering questions about the judiciary, guiding people to available services, and dispelling many common myths about jury duty. We were also able to give the public a first look at our long anticipated new website, with our web team on hand to give folks a “test drive” of the new site.





Jury Service

For the first time in nearly three decades, the jury per diem was finally increased to \$72 from \$40 under a bill passed by the Legislature and signed by Governor Kathy Hochul on May 9, 2025. The measure, which took effect on June 8, attempts to balance the needs of jurors as well as their employers. Under the bill:

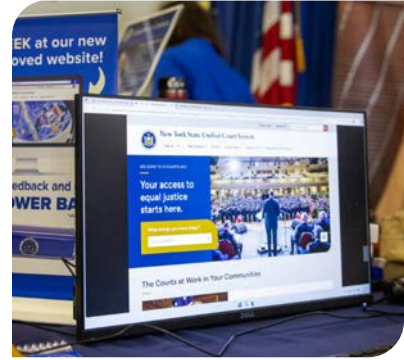
- The State pays the jurors of employers with 10 or fewer employees.
- Employers with more than 10 employees must pay the \$72 per diem or the employees daily wage, whichever is higher, for the first three days of jury service. After that, the State is responsible for the payment.
- If a juror’s daily wage is equal to or higher than \$72, and their employer has more than 10 employees, the employer must pay a minimum of \$72 per day.
- If a juror earns less than \$72 per day, the employer pays the juror their regular wage, and the State makes up the difference.
- Employees who are exempt from overtime are entitled to their full salary for any week in which they perform any work, but their employer can reduce their salary by the amount they receive from the state for jury service.
- Employees may not be penalized or fired by their employer for serving as a juror.

Public Service Announcements

In 2025, five Public Service Announcements the Jury Support Office produced in 2024 with Youth FX in Albany were nominated for a New York Emmy Award. The same PSAs—which were among 16 filmed—aired throughout the State in November on commercial television stations.



The five spots — one each by Judges Valerie Cartright and Joanne Quiñones, former Judge Milton Tingling, Deanna Cantor and Capt. Chris Foti — aired a total of 2,229 times with 12.6 million “impressions” (the total number of times a spot appeared on a TV screen in a household).



Web Makeover

The Unified Court System strives to be transparent and user-friendly, and our website is the prime conduit between the Third Branch of government and the people. However, like most institutional and corporate websites, the Court System’s evolved and grew — and grew, and grew — over many years. When our public-facing site exceeded 10,000 pages, it was time for a thorough housecleaning and reorganization to make all that information more accessible. It was, and is, a mammoth task, but in 2026 we will be launching a cleaner, crisper, more efficient tool that will make it much easier for court-users to quickly find the information they need.

Courts Emergency Alert Portal

The Court System provides a free emergency alert service through which subscribers can obtain immediate notification when a court or courts of interest close or delay opening because of weather or another emergency. Through the portal, individuals can select the counties of interest to them and receive notifications by text, email, telephone, or all three. The Emergency Alert Portal was launched from the ground up in 2021, and is now relied upon by nearly 30,000 subscribers.

Alfred J. Baker | Director of Communications



Websites, whether corporate or governmental, are durable communications tools designed to take hold of an audience while imparting crucial information. In the OCA Communications Department, they unmistakably offer us a firm foundation for our good storytelling.

The origin story of the Unified Court System’s websites – our public-facing one and our internal, Inside-UCS site – show them evolving rapidly as tons and tons of content was being loaded in since their launch back in 2013.

In recent years, visitors found so much content on our websites they often felt they were embarking on an archeological dig through deep layers of dense information across what’s grown into more than 10,000 pages of words, images, and forms on hundreds of occasionally redundant landing spots.

Our current Judicial leaders wanted to make our wonderful troves of content more accessible to our diverse audiences, and more understandable to all.

They saw our content as the ballast helping to keep the UCS ship sailing straight, mostly because it reflects the collective knowledge and wisdom of our employees across the State, and across time. But they wanted to further unleash that

“Our current Judicial Leaders...wanted to make our wonderful troves of content more accessible to our diverse audiences, and more understandable to all.”

information by creating a more inviting look and feel that would modernize functionality while also branding our website products together as one: One online voice for one Unified Court System.

The themes articulated by Chief Judge Wilson and CAJ Zayas and FDCAJ St. George were echoed in the findings of several recent studies the UCS had commissioned – all calling for a uniformity of design.

With those reports in hand showcasing the rationale for change, the leadership team initiated the procurement process to hire a third-party vendor to help lead our website redesign and, in 2024, the vendor contract was signed with Portland Web Works.

Phillip Yow, our website systems director, sharpened his pencils and set about designing the systems with the gifted professionals at Portland Webworks, hosting them for a weeklong summit here in New York in September 2024, and inviting me along on a trip to visit them at their offices in Portland, ME in May 2025, just as our first prototypes were being signed off on by Judicial leadership.

In August of 2025, Phillip and his web team did some user testing at the 2025 Great New York State Fair, in Syracuse, NY, gaining invaluable insights from everyday New Yorkers.

A month later, Phillip and I embarked on a ten-day statewide road trip, visiting every Judicial District across New York to converse with our teams of talented content managers moving information from one system



to another. Court employees from Buffalo to White Plains embraced us, fed us, gave us incredible tours of their facilities. Oftentimes, they shared stories with us, agreeing with the rationale for the website changes.

That content migration work continued diligently across the final months of 2025, and we ended the year on the brink of reaching two exciting milestones: Looking forward to the day in early 2026, when we would be rolling out our redesigned public-facing website (www.nycourts.gov) followed several months later by introducing our renovated internal-facing website, Inside-UCS.

These reimagined websites are more engaging, transparent, interactive, and easy to use.

They offer enhanced search functions, automated workflows, clearer presentations of complex information, and a more satisfying user experience with attractive visual content, stories, graphics, and art and color schemes that – just as Judicial Leadership has envisioned – unmistakably bind our products together as one.



In the News: 2025 Headlines

During 2025, the OCA Communications Department, led by Pulitzer Prize-winning veteran journalist AI Baker, told the story of the UCS through a steady stream of news releases throughout the year. Below is a representative sample of our headlines.



Jan 14

Court of Appeals Judges Attend State of State

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1A4xrdwyP/>



Jan 31

New Program to Simplify Divorce Process for Many New Yorkers

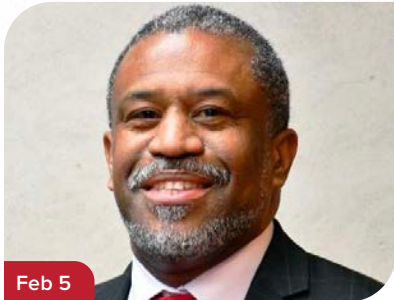
https://www.nycourts.gov/LegacyPDFS/press/pdfs/PR25_04.pdf



Feb 4

Therapy Dogs Assist Rensselaer County Drug Treatment Court

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/17CZHejMGs>



Feb 5

Panel to Examine Challenges Facing Family Justice System

https://www.nycourts.gov/LegacyPDFS/press/pdfs/PR25_05.pdf



Mar 10

Court of Appeals Hears Cases in Binghamton

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1F1Byicuw4>



Apr 4

Judge Discusses Journey from Homeless Shelter to Bench

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/14JHoKpnj5z>



Apr 9

Chief Judge Appoints Working Group to Re-open Harlem Community Justice Center

https://www.nycourts.gov/LegacyPDFS/press/pdfs/PR25_14.pdf



Apr 23

Court of Claims Holds Historic Session at Albany Law School

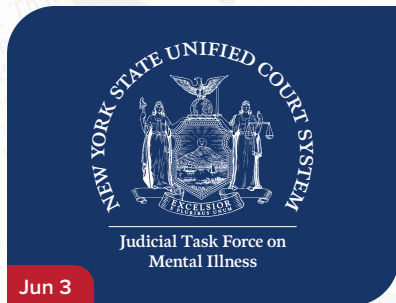
<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1LdWmNKKnq>



May 14

Law Day Art Contest Winners Announced

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1Ayzcy1rCb>



Judicial Task Force on Mental Illness Issues First Report

https://www.nycourts.gov/LegacyPDFS/press/pdfs/PR25_20.pdf



Access to Justice Commission Expands Outreach to Legal Service Providers

https://www.nycourts.gov/LegacyPDFS/press/pdfs/AV25_10.pdf



First Black Administrative Judge in Albany Area Shares Her Story

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1CqBYe7wqx>



Court System Nominated for New York Emmy

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/19bYdguNF3>



Jury Fee Increased

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1BJ6irZrBd7>



New York Courts Grapple with Shortage of Interpreters

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1FZjkwfATf>



Court System Recognizes Historic Plight of Indigenous Children

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1ABPeke3oK>



Court System Adopts Guidelines for Ethical Use of AI

https://www.nycourts.gov/LegacyPDFS/press/pdfs/PR25_23.pdf



Street in Harlem co-Named for Franklin H. Williams

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1GUF9AGmYB>



Out of Many, One

Innovation in Court Operations



“All of us, pulling together, work to change – and sometimes save – lives. That is government, our Third Branch of government, at its best.”

Justin A. Barry, Esq.
Executive Director

The Latin phrase “e pluribus unum,” the traditional motto of the United States, was proposed by John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin in 1776 to symbolize the forging of a nation through diverse colonies and people united in purpose. It means “out of many, one.”



That same sentiment underscores the operational apparatus of the Unified Court System. We are thousands of people in different areas, from different disciplines and tasked with quite different responsibilities but unified in a common goal: equal justice for all. We have many parts, and the whole is greater than the sum of those parts.



Alternative Dispute Resolution

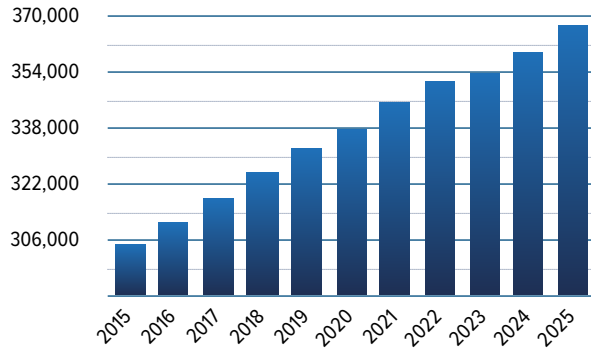
Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) offers litigants the opportunity to resolve disputes using mediation, arbitration, neutral evaluation, restorative justice, summary jury trials, and settlement conferences. ADR can enhance the quality of justice and free up resources to allow courts to focus on matters that require more intense judicial intervention. The Court System aims to ensure that appropriate civil cases are referred to ADR at the earliest practicable opportunity, to resolve disputes without the stress and costs of extended litigation.

In 2025, there were more than 190,000 reported referrals to ADR, the largest number since Court System-wide ADR data collection began in 2019. The Court System roster has more than 1,000 mediators and neutral evaluators, who completed the bi-annual statewide redesignation process in 2025.

Roster mediators are augmented by over 500 volunteer mediators, who serve through the Community Dispute Resolution Centers (CDRC) Program. CDRCs are local nonprofit organizations who are contracted to provide court-referred and community-based ADR services. In 2025, the Division of ADR and local judicial districts collaborated to award new CDRC contracts via competitive procurement for counties in New York City. In 2025, CDRC mediators provided services in nearly 20,000 cases, including more than 12,000 in court-referred matters. Additionally, dedicated, skilled, mediation-trained judicial and non-judicial Court personnel are available in every judicial district to ensure equal and affordable access to high-quality ADR options.

In 2025, more than 1,000 judicial and non-judicial personnel, CDRC staff, volunteers, and roster neutrals attended Court-sponsored mediation, arbitration, antibias, intimate partner violence screening trainings as well as ongoing continuing ADR education programs.

Total New York Attorney Population



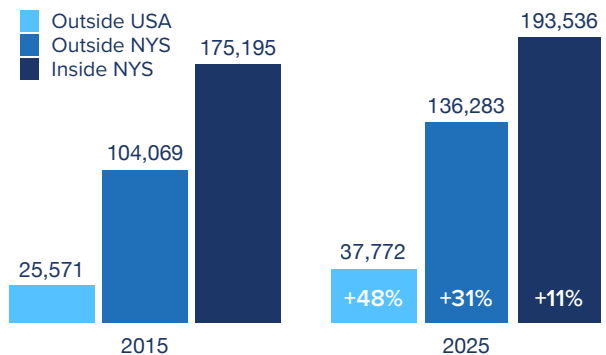
Attorney Registration

In December of 2024, Chief Administrative Judge Zayas amended Part 118 of the Rules of the Chief Administrator to mandate the reporting requirements regarding other jurisdictions where attorneys are admitted to practice law. This new registration requirement will require attorneys to list their admissions (excluding pro hac vice admissions) in other U.S. states and territories, U.S. federal courts, or jurisdictions outside of the U.S. Further, the rule change asks attorneys to confirm whether they remain in good standing in those jurisdictions and disclose whether they have ever been the subject of discipline in any other jurisdiction.

The registration requirement affects the 190,000 members of the New York bar who practice within the State, as well as the additional 170,000 attorneys admitted in New York who live or practice in other states or abroad, as well as in-house counsels and legal consultants.

The change was facilitated in conjunction with the Division of Technology and Court Research to accommodate the new reporting requirement. Throughout 2025, the unit undertook customer service efforts to familiarize attorneys with this new filing requirement as well as the online registration mandate.

New York Attorneys by Location: 2015 vs. 2025





Child Welfare & Family Justice Division

The Office for Justice Initiatives' Child Welfare and Family Justice Division oversees the federally funded Child Welfare Court Improvement Project (CWCIP). Aligned with the Family Court's mission to safeguard children and families, CWCIP drives systemic change through a collaborative, trauma-informed, and data-driven approach focused on timely permanency. CWCIP, in collaboration with the Permanent Commission on Justice for Families, facilitates the Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG), ensuring that policy development is guided by those with lived experience in the child welfare system. In 2025, LEAG led statewide initiatives for National Foster Care, Reunification, and Kinship Care Awareness Months.

Coordinators operationalize key CWCIP objectives within their judicial districts, fostering interdisciplinary partnerships with Family Court judges, the Office of Children and Family Services, Tribal Nations, and local child-welfare agencies. Their efforts support the Statewide Coordinating Judge for Family Court Matters in ensuring alignment with state priorities.

The Division addressed substance use disorders by implementing the "Better for Families" initiative and hosting a related conference in 2025. The Division further strengthens the legal system by facilitating child permanency mediations across judicial districts, delivering trauma-informed education to the judiciary, and collaborating on trainings and strategic initiatives that support the Indian Child Welfare Act statewide. Finally, the Division championed judicial wellness and engagement by leading Youth in Court initiatives and establishing the "52 Ways for 52 Weeks of Wellness Team" to support judicial resilience.



New York State Supreme Court Commercial Division

Since its creation in 1995, the Commercial Division of State Supreme Court has transformed business litigation and has made New York State a preferred venue for complex business disputes.

The benefits of the Commercial Division to the State of New York have been widely recognized. More than 300 positive articles and blog posts have been published in recent years discussing the benefits the Commercial Division provides to the Court System, litigants, and lawyers. In addition to these benefits, the Commercial Division helps New York State attract and retain businesses and therefore generate tax revenues and provide jobs.

A permanent Advisory Council comprised of distinguished commercial practitioners and judges from around the State advises the Chief Judge on matters pertaining to the Commercial Division.

During 2025, the Commercial Division Advisory Council organized a virtual lunchtime lecture series for summer associates and lawyers at multiple offices of major law firms throughout the United States to educate our future and current lawyers about the Commercial Division and about the value of clerking, interning, and practicing in the Commercial Division.

The Advisory Council also hosted a virtual programs for law schools and in-house counsel on the benefits and advantages to litigating in the Commercial Division. Finally, the Advisory Council proposed a number of new and amended Commercial Division Rules which have been adopted by the Administrative Board of the Courts.

The Commercial Division is a modern, cost-efficient, and client-focused venue that is on the cutting edge of dispute resolution for commercial matters. Choosing a New York court is good for businesses, good for New York lawyers, and good for our New York economy.



Court Modernization

The Division of Court Modernization (DCM) is tasked with making sure our courtrooms and court spaces are fully accessible to the people who come to us for relief as well as our staff. In 2025, milestones were reached in making our facilities more user-friendly for those with low vision and low hearing.

After five years of collaborative effort, every courtroom in the State is now equipped with an assistive listening system to aid those who are hard of hearing. The system includes an infrared-based pocket receiver, a headphone, and a neckloop. Neckloops are wearable audio accessories resembling a lanyard for the wireless transmission of sound to hearing aids and cochlear implants equipped with a telecoil. They are now available and on demand in all of our courtrooms.

Further, DCM is collaborating with Manhattan Supreme Court Civil Term and disability advocacy groups, including CIDNY (Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York), on a pilot initiative to assist low-vision jurors at the 60 Centre Street court facility in Manhattan. A special seat was reserved in the jury box for jurors who are visually impaired. Two 15-inch monitors, one dedicated for evidence viewing, the other for a head-and-shoulder view of the witness, were mounted on top of the jury box railings at the eye-level. In addition, the chair was modified so that the juror can adjust the chair position for closer inspection of the evidence and the demeanor of the witness.

The 60 Centre Street pilot has been a great success, and efforts are underway to replicate the accommodations in courtrooms and jury deliberation rooms throughout the State.



Diversity and Inclusion

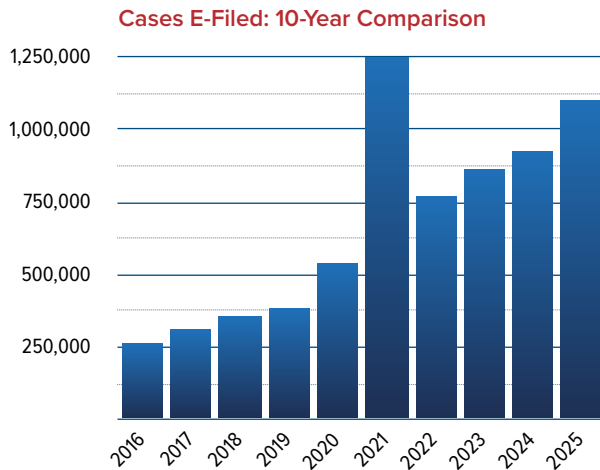
In 2025, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI), a unit within the Office for Justice Initiatives, advanced a comprehensive statewide agenda centered on equity, belonging, and cultural consciousness.

ODI delivered high-impact programming, strengthened statewide partnerships, and expanded its educational and strategic capacity. It launched a series of major initiatives, including the Fourth Annual Diversity Summit, the inaugural Transgender Day of Visibility program (in partnership with the Failla Commission), and multiple Introduction to Cultural Consciousness (ICC) trainings across judicial districts. Staff facilitated workshops on racial disparities, unrepresented litigants, and cultural consciousness while engaging in key working groups on anti-Asian hate, tribal justice, new-hire orientation, and the Community Remembrance Project.

ODI launched a neurodiversity in the workplace working group to foster awareness and information about an underrecognized segment of our court users.

ODI deepened its impact through expanded antibias, radical listening, and trauma-informed training to mental health and other problem-solving courts. It played partnership roles in Asian American and Pacific Islander Month, Black History Month, Diwali, Ramadan, Jewish American Heritage Month, LGBTQ+ Pride, and Juneteenth observances across the state.

ODI achieved several major milestones in 2025, including the Soil Collection Ceremony in Newcomb, NY, marking a historic remembrance of a 1932 lynching victim. ODI delivered statewide trainings at court association conferences, professional development academies, and judicial district convenings. It produced a unified implementation framework for the ICC curriculum, establishing success metrics and governance structures to gauge ODI's long-term productivity and efficacy. Collectively, these efforts reflect a year defined by strategic growth, cross-system collaboration, and a deepened commitment to justice, dignity, and belonging.



E-Filing Division

The New York State Courts Electronic Filing (NYSCEF) system continues to modernize court operations by offering a secure, efficient way to file and access court documents remotely. Its 24/7 availability reduces the need for courthouse visits and supports broader electronic access to justice across New York State.

In 2025, the system processed nearly 1.1 million cases and estates, with over 16.6 million documents e-filed. Nearly 60,000 unrepresented litigants submitted 225,000 documents, underscoring the system’s accessibility and growing adoption.

Sixty-one of the State’s 62 Supreme Courts now mandate e-filing for all civil matters. The Court of Claims implemented mandatory e-filing across all districts for all claims, further standardizing electronic access across jurisdictions. In NYC Civil Court, the mandatory program expanded to include consumer credit matters, generating over 34,500 filings since July.

Family Court e-filing doubled in reach, now active in 24 counties, and will expand in 2026. A new conversion process was developed to allow e-filing in Family Court matters – such as custody, visitation, guardianship, parentage, paternity, and support cases – that were previously filed via paper or Electronic Document Delivery System, and critical to expanding access. Superior Criminal Court launched its first e-filing program in Kings County, with additional locations expected next year. In another major development, Local Civil Courts outside NYC will begin implementing e-filing for the first time in 2026.

To support statewide implementation, NYSCEF will expand its physical presence with a new satellite office in Albany, strengthening coordination and assisting with the continued rollout of e-filing.



Facilities

In 2025, the Court System worked closely with cities and counties to advance capital projects and tenant work projects around the State. With a more streamlined work order process and by employing more advanced technologies, over 100 tenant work projects were completed, providing upgrades and repairs to court facilities. The Facilities Unit provided key support for work on the Nassau County Matrimonial and Family Center and renovation of the Brooklyn Civil Court. UCS also opened a new Court Officers’ Academy and expanded its administrative footprint with the Patroon Creek offices in Albany. Additionally, the Court Facilities Capital Review Board approved capital plan submissions from the Cities of Watertown, Mount Vernon, and Middletown, and Greene, Steuben, and Dutchess Counties. These projects ranged from electrical and plumbing upgrades to roof replacements, HVAC system improvements, and the construction of a new court facility. UCS remains committed to partnering with municipalities to ensure that court facilities are both suitable and sufficient and meet the needs of the public.

In September 2025, the UCS’s new Court Facilities Capital Review Board website (nycourtfacilitiesboard.org) went live. It has information about upcoming and past meetings, the CFCRB Board members, relevant statutes, Board certificates, and resources for use by cities and counties.

Looking ahead, UCS anticipates that Middletown City Court will be completed and occupied in the first half of 2026, as well as a new courthouse for the Appellate Term in Brooklyn. Additionally, the Staten Island Family Court project is moving into its final design-build phase.



Richard C. Failla LGBTQ Commission

The Richard C. Failla LGBTQ Commission of the New York State Courts is dedicated to promoting equal participation and access throughout the Court System by all persons, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Its work in 2025 centered on educational and awareness programming and recognizing the achievements of trailblazers in the continuing struggle to retain hard-fought rights, such as the right to marry. It also co-sponsored the Transgender Day of Visibility program with the Office for Diversity and Inclusion.

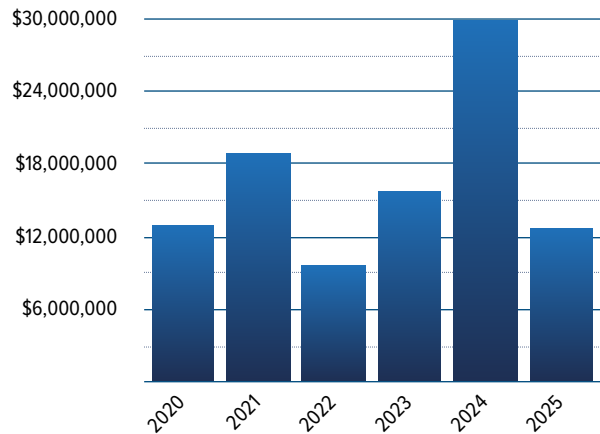
During LGBTQ Pride Month (June), the Commission was present at over a dozen programs around the State.

The Commission organized a two-panel symposium at the Syracuse University College of Law, “Affirming LGBTQ+ Lives, Democracy and the Rule of Law: Recognizing the Tenth Anniversary of *Obergefell v. Hodges*.”

While the annual event was in New York City, the Commission also presented at the National LGBTQ+ Bar Association’s Lavender Law Conference in July on how advocates in other court systems can leverage resources to advance justice for the LGBTQ community. One example of that in our own backyard was revising and then distributing statewide a new “Best Practices for Using Trans-Inclusive Language” bench card during the summer.

Finally, in November, Chief Judge Rowan Wilson appointed Hon. Javier E. Vargas the new downstate co-chair and additionally appointed four new members: Hon. Andrea Composto, Hon. Curtis Farber, Hon. Dale Fong-Frederick, and Hon. Josh Hanshaft.

Federal Grant Annual Awards



Grants and Contracts

The Division of Grants, Contracts and Procurement is responsible for managing the Court System’s procurement of goods and services, contracting with legal and human service organizations, and managing external funding including federal grants.

The Division provides centralized procurement support to judicial district administrative offices and multiple OCA units, including the Divisions of Court Modernization, Court Facilities, Technology and Court Research, Human Resources, Professional and Court Services, and Alternative Dispute Resolution, as well as the Office for Justice Initiatives, and the Judicial Institute, among others. Staff maintain productive relationships with the purchasing units and the vendor community, promote compliance with procurement regulations, and ensure that courts and offices efficiently access the goods and services they need to accomplish their missions.

In addition, Grants, Contracts and Procurement oversees the funding of more than 300 contracts with an annual aggregate value of more than \$350 million. These programs provide a broad array of services that support court operations, including Judiciary Civil Legal Services, Attorney for the Child, Children’s Centers, CASA, Community Dispute Resolution Center, and Lawyer’s Assistance programs as well as programs administered by the Center for Justice Innovation and the Justice Court Assistance program.

This year the office managed 50 active federal grants as well as intergovernmental funding arrangements that support court-based programs and initiatives. These funding streams support upwards of 120 grant-funded contracts primarily for services to the problem-solving courts.



Tribal Courts

New York State is home to eight federally recognized tribes, and one state recognized tribe, ranking 10th nationally for having one of the highest numbers of tribal nations exercising their sovereignty.

New York’s Court System has been a national leader in improving the administration of justice for tribal nations, and that work has been done through the efforts of the Unified Court System Tribal Courts Committee.

Justice Mark Montour of the Appellate Division, Fourth Department, serves as State facilitator for the New York Federal, State and Tribal Courts and Indian Nations Justice Forum. Justice Montour is the first Native American in New York State history to ever hold a state judicial position, and the first elevated to an Appellate Division department.

Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)

The Court System leads a statewide ICWA committee, in partnership with the Office of Children and Family Services to provide support for training and regular convenings to address ICWA systems issues. This committee hosted its 7th Annual Statewide conference, in April of 2025 and a New York City Family Court Judges ICWA training in November of 2025.

The ICWA Committee and the Office for Justice Initiatives’ Child Welfare and Family Justice Division led a working group to improve Family Court operations and processes when a case involves or potentially involves a child subject to the ICWA.

In 2025, funding was earmarked for a new Statewide ICWA Coordinator role, a first of its kind in the NYS courts.



Inspector General

The Inspector General’s Office investigates infractions of disciplinary standards, criminal activities, conflicts of interest, misconduct, malfeasance, and incompetence on the part of nonjudicial employees of the Unified Court System (UCS), and persons or corporations doing business with the UCS, with respect to their interactions with the court.

The Court System has a responsibility to promote a work environment free from all forms of bias and discrimination.

Within the Inspector General’s Office, there are three specialized units – General Investigations, Discrimination Matters, and Fiduciary Appointments, each supervised by a Managing Attorney.

The General Investigations Unit investigates allegations of wrongdoing, including criminal activity, misconduct, infractions of disciplinary standards, and conflicts of interest.

The Discrimination Matters Unit investigates allegations of bias based on race, sex (including sexual harassment), sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or gender dysphoria, domestic violence status, prior criminal record (in certain circumstances), age, marital status, disability, national origin, religion, or military status that affect the workplace for UCS personnel.

The Fiduciary Appointments Unit investigates allegations of unsatisfactory performance or misconduct by individuals appointed as guardians, guardians ad litem, receivers, referees, and attorneys for the child under Part 36 of the Rules of the Chief Judge.



New York State Judicial Institute

The Judicial Institute, which stands as the premier educational center for all New York State judges, is dedicated to strengthening the administration of justice and promoting the rule of law. As a leader in judicial education, the Institute offers a robust array of foundational and continuing education programs that promote excellence and professionalism. The Institute's core mission is to elevate the quality of New York's courts by ensuring that State court judges and attorneys remain at the forefront of legal developments and prepared to meet the evolving challenges of the justice system.

Pursuant to its mission, the Institute also functions as a think-tank, addressing critical societal questions by encouraging dialogues on matters such as immigration, the intersection of the federal and New York constitutions, youth and adults impacted by the juvenile and criminal justice systems, new bail and criminal discovery legislation, the importance of considering children's voices in child welfare decisions, and gender-responsive initiatives. Through this work, the Institute can effectively respond to new and emerging issues New York's judges may face.

The Institute is equally committed to broadening access to the legal profession. Through initiatives such as the NY Legal Education Opportunity Program and the Pre-Law Discovery Initiative, the Institute supports prospective law students and inspires high school students to pursue legal careers, reflecting the Institute's dedication to our future legal minds.

Established under Judiciary Law § 219-a, the Institute operates as the Unified Court System's center for judicial education, training, and research.



Justice Court Support

The Office of Justice Court Support (OJCS) works with Town and Village Courts statewide to provide legal counsel, as well as education and training, to 1,664 judges and 1,716 court clerks. In 2025, OJCS brought back several in-person training programs to provide Town and Village Judges with the annual advanced training requirements, and the return was received with much enthusiasm and appreciation. Specifically, OJCS resumed trainings at the Association of Towns Conference in New York City in February of 2025, as well as SUNY Potsdam in July of 2025.

As part of the annual advanced training, specifically the required anti-bias training, OJCS presented the video "Fairness and Respect for All in the Town and Village Courts." The video focused on retired judges' and court clerks' experiences starting their roles in a Town or Village Court, as well as how to manage and maintain a courtroom, all while ensuring fairness, dignity and respect for those appearing in the justice system in a Town or Village Court.

In addition, judges and court clerks were also provided a follow up to the 2024 training on the Americans with Disabilities Act, with the 2025 course focused on judges' and court clerks' responsibilities, as well as scenarios to promote the discussion of the review, and approval or denial, of requests to ensure access to justice and equality.

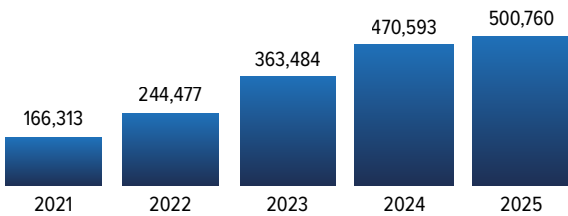
Finally, the annual training included a course on cybersecurity, which focused on how to prioritize cybersecurity and defend against cyber-attacks. The course identified common risks that the Town and Village Courts might encounter in their digital environment, and outlined steps for the courts to take in trying to prevent a breach before it happens. The course also discussed data breach laws and appropriate steps to take in the event of a security breach.



Language Access

To provide free interpreting services to court users who speak languages other than English, the Court System employs 281 interpreters who offer interpreting in more than 20 languages, with another 1,800 credentialed per diem interpreters on-call who represent over 200 languages. In 2025, interpreters served 500,760 court users in 132 different languages.

Parties Served by Interpreters: 2021-2025



The Office of Language Access (OLA) also manages American Sign Language interpreter assignments. In 2025, there were more than 1,600 court appearances for 1,900 deaf court users.

OLA also assists in the translation of court guides, signage, surveys, scripts, and various court documents. There were 39 Spanish translation projects completed, and 40 Chinese translations in both simplified and traditional script.

The Court System is continually recruiting for more interpreters, and in 2025 over 1,500 applicants were screened, with 700 candidates taking the written exam. In addition, approximately 75 students participated in an internship program. The OLA has onboarded over 80 per diem interpreters for statewide assignments.

Over 40 newly hired Spanish Interpreters attended an orientation held at the OLA, increasing the total number of interpreters to 281. The new hires learned about Ethics, Professionalism and Procedures for Court Interpreters. Their supervisors attended a refresher program on protocols and coaching.



Trial Court Support

The Office of Trial Court Support (TCS) provides operational expertise and guidance to support the day-to-day operations of New York’s trial courts.

TCS received and responded to more than 500 help desk tickets, 1,725 emails, and 1,200 phone calls from court administrators, managers, and staff seeking operational guidance and support. TCS spearheaded implementation of numerous legislative initiatives, including amendments to Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS), Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO), and affirmation in lieu of notarization (CPLR 2106) statutes, as well as Safe Landing and Family Court Name Change legislation.

TCS continued to build its online training library for court staff, adding 60 new training presentations just this year, including the local and superior criminal court introductory trainings on operations and case management system (UCMS) for new hires, which are pending focus group feedback.

Advancing the Court System’s commitment to greater access to justice, TCS revised dozens of forms-- including Mental Health Law guardianship forms, family offense petitions, fee waiver applications and other documents—to avoid unnecessary legalese and make these critical documents more accessible to court users. TCS also conducted in-person training seminars and trained approximately 570 court staff in 10 different judicial districts, as well as approximately 1,000 attendees at the annual conferences for the Supreme & County Court Clerks, City & District Court Clerks, Family Court Clerks, and Law Librarians Associations.

Legal Information

The Office of Legal Information provides legal research assistance to both staff and the general public—in person through court law libraries and virtually via the 1-800-CourtNY telephone hotline and the question@nycourts.gov email contact. Together with the “Ask a Law Librarian” (AskALL) chat/text platform, these services respond to tens of thousands of information requests annually.

In 2025, operators at the 1-800-CourtNY hotline answered more than 23,150 calls, addressing a wide range of inquiries including questions regarding court appearance dates, forms, procedures, and access to court records. Staff from the Office of Legal Information responded to over 9,000 emails submitted through the Question mailbox.

Additionally, the AskALL service handled at least 3,630 inquiries, while its “Frequently Asked Questions” and topical guides were viewed more than 85,300 times by the public. Throughout 2025, OLI laid the groundwork toward the goal of integrating AI-driven research features within its current legal research platforms with the hope of achieving this goal sometime in 2026.

Technology and Court Research

In 2025, the Division of Technology and Court Research (DotCR) made major progress toward implementing the Clean Slate Act, which was signed into law by Gov. Kathy Hochul in November 2023. This groundbreaking law will seal millions of old criminal records, giving people a real chance to rebuild their lives—whether that means getting a job, finding housing, or going back to school.

By November 2027, the Court System must gather and review every conviction from every court across the State. That includes figuring out how much time each person served, whether they’re still under supervision or have a pending case, and more. DoTCR is building powerful new systems to match and verify millions of records with precision. It’s a massive effort—but one that will change lives across New York.

Other DoTCR milestones in 2025 included statewide rollout of the EPlea platform, which allows motorists to resolve low-level traffic infractions entirely online; launch of a powerful new tool, Criminal Court Reporting Portal, which not only provides criminal courts with a centralized view of data but also makes the correction of errors much more efficient; and oversight of the expansion of the New York State Courts Electronic Filing system.

Record Production

The Office of Record Production ensures the accuracy and integrity of court records, supports public access to records, and provides daily guidance in the development and implementation of policies and best practices that support the courts.

A pilot project involving the e-filing of transcripts in criminal appeals continues to be successful in two Departments of the Appellate Division (the Third Department in Albany and the Fourth Department in Rochester) and will be extended to the two downstate Departments (the First Department in Manhattan and the Second Department in Brooklyn). This initiative will greatly improve efficiency in the appellate process by allowing all involved parties to review transcripts simultaneously, thereby reducing delays, and the burden associated with storage of hard copies.

Recruitment efforts for professional court reporters continue through extensive print advertising, social media, career fairs and community outreach. The Court Reporter-Trainee title hirings have increased this past year and the traineeship of these reporters has proven successful.

Justice Initiatives

The Office for Justice Initiatives (OJI) develops policies, programs, and innovative strategies to reduce barriers to justice and to promote fairness, inclusion, and a bias-free environment in all New York State courts and offices. Equal Access to Justice drives all OJI Divisions and Offices, including the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, the newly created Office of Guardianship Matters and Elder Justice, and Divisions of Access to Justice, Child Welfare and Family Justice, Judiciary Civil Legal Services, Problem Solving Justice, and Youth and Emerging Adult Justice. OJI educates, trains, and monitors a variety of programs. Notably, in 2025, OJI hosted a two-day Youth Justice Summit for Family Court and Youth Part judges to promote sustainable positive outcomes for system involved youth, their families, and our communities.

OJI also supports the UCS’ Justice Coordinators, on-the-ground leaders who work to identify local access and equal justice gaps then engage communities and stakeholders to close those gaps. Their success has resulted in an expansion to the Court of Claims and the Appellate Division. This expansion underscores the court system’s commitment to access and equal justice at every level of the judiciary.



Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission

The Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission, co-chaired by Hon. Shirley Troutman, Associate Judge of the Court of Appeals, and Hon. Troy K. Webber, Associate Justice of the Appellate Division, First Department, works statewide to ensure courts are responsive to all New Yorkers in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion within the courts and legal profession.

In June, the Commission hosted its annual Juneteenth program at the Chautauqua Institution’s Forum on Democracy, featuring Chief Judge Rowan D. Wilson as keynote speaker.

October brought a Street Co-Naming Ceremony honoring Ambassador Franklin H. Williams on what would have been his 108th birthday. Held near his Harlem residence and followed by a reception at the Schomburg Center, the event celebrated Ambassador Williams—civil rights leader, diplomat, Peace Corps co-organizer, and founding Chair of the Commission—for his enduring contributions to civic engagement, youth empowerment, and public service. Family, court leaders, elected officials, and community partners participated, ensuring his legacy continues to inspire.

Also, in October, former Assistant Deputy Counsel Karlene Dennis was appointed the Executive Director of the Commission.

The Legal Fellows Program continues to provide opportunities for recent law graduates through mentorship and rotational placements with judges and courts. Our Legal Fellow graduates have advanced into roles as court attorneys, public interest lawyers, assistant district attorneys, and private practice associates.

The Commission also published its Professional Development Academy Booklet, highlighting training in public speaking, résumé writing, networking, and inclusion, with a notable 40% promotion rate among graduates. Public Jury Hearings expanded with a four-part statewide series examining barriers to jury service, featuring testimony from jurors, judges, court officials, and community organizations. The Commission will publish a Jury report with recommendations for jury outreach and diversification.

Through these initiatives, the Commission strengthens public trust, encourages professional growth, and advances fairness, equity, and inclusion across New York’s courts.





Women in the Courts Commission

The Hon. Betty Weinberg Ellerin Permanent Commission on Women in the Courts saw many changes and made significant strides in 2025.

Felicia S. Raphael, Esq. came on board as Executive Director in January of 2025. In May 2025, Chief Judge Wilson changed the status of the decades-long committee to a Permanent Commission. This transition recognized the historic, unwavering, and ongoing efforts of this dynamic group to promote justice and gender equality in the courts and to ensure that women's issues remain at the forefront of court administration.

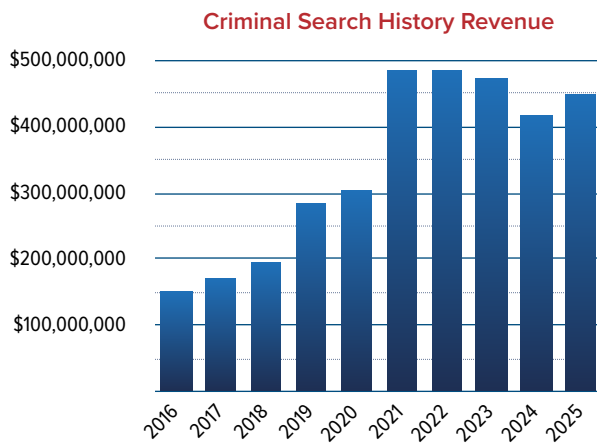
Throughout 2025, the Permanent Commission addressed critical issues raised in the Gender Survey 2020 Report, including the ongoing challenges women attorneys and litigants face regarding credibility and value in the legal system. The Permanent Commission also addressed the link between domestic violence and animal abuse, and worked with private sector stakeholders to combat outdated laws and policies regarding the value of women's work and civil damages. Additionally, the Permanent Commission addressed issues concerning female prisoners' access to medical care, challenges concerning human trafficking, and concerns regarding domestic violence and immigration status.

One of the committee's most notable achievements in 2025 was the installation of lactation pods, creation of lactation rooms, and installation of baby-changing tables in many courthouses throughout the State, in furtherance of recommendations in the Gender Survey 2020 Report. Those improvements have had a significant impact on the ability of courthouse users to access the justice system without concerns about childcare or the comfort and safety of nursing mothers.



Fiscal Overview

The UCS operates on a fiscal year that runs from April 1 through March 31, with funding supplied through the State Budget and approved by the Legislature and Governor. The Judiciary annually seeks funding through a Judiciary Budget that, after approval by the Court of Appeals and a certification of need by the Chief Judge, is transmitted to the Governor for submission to the Legislature in accordance with Article VII, Section 1, of the State Constitution. Appropriations of \$4.1 billion were approved by the Legislature for the State Judiciary for the fiscal year 2026.



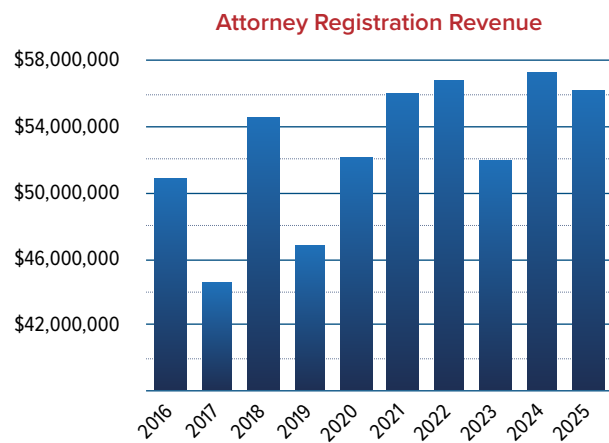
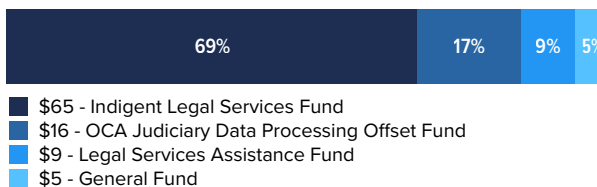
Criminal History Search Revenues

In 2025, the Criminal History Search Unit collected \$450 million for criminal history search records.

A portion of Court System-collected revenue includes fees for services provided by the UCS's Criminal History Search Unit, which, since 2003, has sold criminal history public records that include felony and misdemeanor convictions from all 62 counties. By law, the Office of Court Administration is solely responsible for the sale of these records produced by a search of its electronic database, charging a \$95 fee per name and date of birth searched. The revenue generated from each search request is allocated as follows:

- \$65 to the Indigent Legal Services Fund
- \$16 to the Office of Court Administration's Judiciary Data Processing Offset Fund
- \$9 to the Legal Services Assistance Fund
- \$5 to the General Fund

\$95 Criminal Search History Fee Breakdown



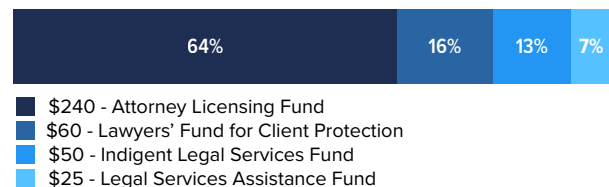
Attorney Registration Revenues

In 2025, the UCS collected \$56,250,000 in attorney registration fees.

All attorneys admitted to practice law in New York must file a biennial registration form. Attorneys actively practicing law in New York State or elsewhere must, upon registering, pay a \$375 fee, allocated as follows:

- \$240 to the Attorney Licensing Fund to cover the cost of the Appellate Division attorney admission and disciplinary programs
- \$60 to the Lawyers' Fund for Client Protection to support programs providing restitution to clients of dishonest attorneys
- \$50 to the Indigent Legal Services Fund to cover fees of lawyers serving on 18-b panels representing indigent criminal defendants
- \$25 to the Legal Services Assistance Fund

\$375 Attorney Registration Fee Breakdown



Measures Enacted into Law

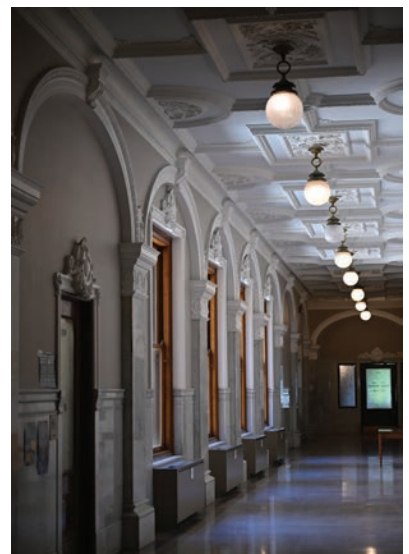
The Office of Counsel is the principal representative of the Unified Court System in the legislative process. In this role, it is responsible for developing the Judiciary's legislative program and for providing the legislative and executive branches with analyses and recommendations concerning legislative measures that may have an impact on the courts and their administrative operations. It also serves a liaison function with bar association committees, judicial associations, and other groups, public and private, with respect to changes in court-related statutory law and staffs the Chief Administrative Judge's advisory committees on civil practice, criminal law and procedure, family law, estates and trusts, and matrimonial practice.



The Judiciary's 2025 Legislative Agenda

During the 2025 legislative session, Counsel's Office, with the assistance of the Chief Administrative Judge's advisory committees, prepared and submitted 24 new measures for legislative consideration. Ultimately, ten (10) were enacted into law, plus the Judiciary Budget bill, and three (OCA 2; OCA 4; OCA 9) were Vetoed.

- **Chapter 51 – BUDGET.** (Senate 3001-A / Assembly 3001-A). Enacts the 2025-26 Judiciary Budget. Eff. 5/20/25.
- **Chapter 55 (part of Budget negotiations, Part LL) – OCA #1 – STRUCTURE & OPERATIONS.** Relates to Jury Per Diem Increase. A3005-C / S3005-C. Eff. 6/8/25.
- **Chapter 55 (part of Budget negotiations, Part WW) – OCA #24 – CRIMINAL.** Assembly 3005-C/Senate 3005-C. Relates to Virtual Appearances. Eff. 7/8/25.
- **Chapter 534 – OCA #8 – FAMILY.** Assembly 8298-Carroll / Senate 8176-Persaud. Relates to the Time-Limit for Appeals in all Categories of Family Court Cases. Eff. 3/21/26.
- **Chapter 535 – OCA #13 – MATRIMONIAL.** Assembly 8299-Lavine / Senate 8270-Webb. Relates to Automatic Orders in Matrimonial Actions. Eff. 1/20/26.
- **Chapter 536 – OCA #10 – FAMILY.** Assembly 8407-Lavine / Senate 8198-Brisport). Relates to Requiring Certain Records Checks in Child Custody Proceedings; repealer. Eff. 12/21/25.
- **Chapter 563 – OCA #19 – SURROGATES.** Assembly 8408-Dais / Senate 8175-Sepulveda. Allows Certain Method for Service of Process. Eff. 11/21/25.
- **Chapter 564 – OCA #3 – CIVIL.** Assembly 8302-O'Pharrow / Senate 8195-Hoylman-Sigal. Relates to Affirmations in Lieu of Affidavits. Eff. 11/21/25.
- **Chapter 565 – OCA #21 – CRIMINAL.** Senate 8196-Hoylman-Sigal / Assembly 8890-Burroughs. Relates to Judges Presiding Over Designated Youth Parts. Eff. 11/21/25.
- **Chapter 570 – OCA #17 – SURROGATES.** Assembly 8300-McMahon / Senate 8373-Hoylman-Sigal. Relates to the Computation and Allocation of the Commissions of Trustees of Charitable Trusts; repealer. Eff. 1/20/26.
- **Chapter 571 – OCA #11 – FAMILY.** Assembly 8297-Lunsford / Senate 8374-Persaud. Establishes a Pilot Program to Provide Alternative Dispute Resolution and Navigator Services in Child Support Matters. Eff. 8/18/26.
- **VETOED – OCA #2 – STRUCTURE & OPERATIONS.** A8801-Pheffer Amato / S8207 – Jackson. Relates to Age and Service Eligibility Requirements for Ordinary Retirement for Members of the Unified Court System; Restores 55/30 for all Members; Reduces the Retirement Age from 63 to 62.
- **VETOED – OCA #4 – CIVIL.** Assembly A8303-Lunsford / Senate 8186-Gianaris. Provides that a foreign corporation's application for authority to do business in this state constitutes consent to jurisdiction of the courts of this state.
- **VETOED – OCA #9 – FAMILY.** Assembly 8271-Davila / Senate 8197-Brisport. Relates to the right to counsel in certain family court proceedings.



Court Structure and Caseload Activity

The Unified Court System is comprised of 11 separate trial courts, an Appellate Division with four regional departments, an Appellate Term that hears appeals from certain trial courts in certain regions of the state, and the Court of Appeals — the highest court in the State.

Appellate Courts

Court of Appeals

The Court of Appeals is the State’s court of last resort. It consists of the Chief Judge and six Associate Judges appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate, to 14-year terms. The court’s caseload activity is reported in TABLE 1.

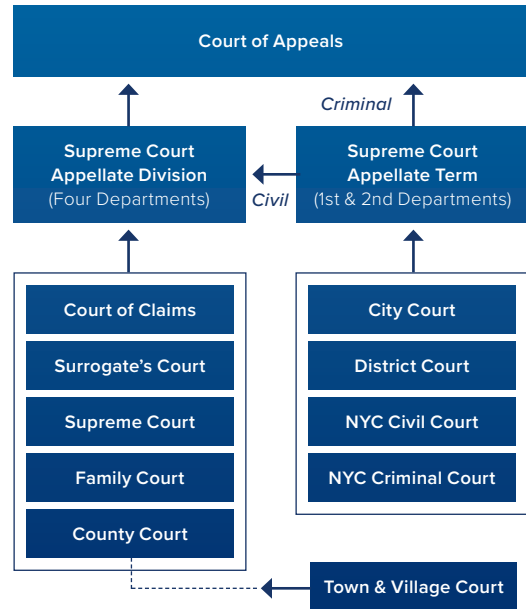


Table 1: Caseload Activity in Court of Appeals - 2025							
Applications Decided [CPL 460.20(3)(b)]							1,297
Records on Appeal Filed							110
Oral Arguments (Includes Submissions)							118
Appeals Decided							119
Motions Decided							817
Judicial Conduct Determinations Reviewed							0
Dispositions of Appeals Decided in the Court of Appeals by Basis of Jurisdiction							
BASIS OF JURISDICTION	AFFIRMED	REVERSED	MODIFIED	DISMISSED	OTHER*	TOTAL	
All Cases:							
Dissents in Appellate Division	9	4	1	0	0	14	
Permission of Court of Appeals or Judge thereof	42	17	5	0	0	64	
Permission of Appellate Division or Justice thereof	21	9	3	0	0	33	
Constitutional Question	4	0	0	0	0	4	
Stipulation for Judgment Absolute	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Other	0	0	1	0	3	4	
Total	76	30	10	0	3	119	
Civil Cases:							
Dissents in Appellate Division	9	4	1	0	0	14	
Permission of Court of Appeals	25	11	3	0	0	39	
Permission of Appellate Division	8	9	1	0	0	18	
Constitutional Question	4	0	0	0	0	4	
Stipulation for Judgment Absolute	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Other	0	0	1	0	3	4	
Total	46	24	6	0	3	79	
Criminal Cases:							
Permission of Court of Appeals Judge	17	6	2	0	0	25	
Permission of Appellate Division Justice	13	0	2	0	0	15	
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Total	30	6	4	0	0	40	

*Includes anomalies which did not result in an affirmation, reversal, modification or dismissal (e.g., judicial suspensions, acceptance of a case for review pursuant to Court Rule 500.27)

Appellate Division

Below the Court of Appeals is the Appellate Division of State Supreme Court, a mid-level appellate court. The Presiding Justice and Associate Justices of the Appellate Division in each Judicial Department are designated by the Governor from among Justices elected to the Supreme Court. The Presiding Justices serve for the duration of the term for which they were elected to Supreme Court; the Associate Justices may serve terms of five years or of indeterminate length, depending on the seats they are appointed to fill. The Appellate Division's caseload activity is listed in TABLE 2.

	FIRST DEPT		SECOND DEPT		THIRD DEPT		FOURTH DEPT		TOTAL
	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal	
Records on Appeal Filed	1,731	2,763	3,085	590	692	284	599	457	10,201
Disposed of before argument or submission (e.g., dismissed, withdrawn, settled):	2,763	483	4,179	384	1,093	139	0	0	9,041
Disposed of after argument or submission:									
Affirmed	879	406	1,551	465	407	213	342	322	4,585
Reversed	255	22	582	36	78	27	80	34	1,114
Modified	271	100	237	60	85	22	76	30	881
Dismissed	92	5	320	7	52	4	121	16	647
Other	17	15	144	100	4	0	4	14	298
Total Dispositions	4,277	1,031	7,013	1,052	1,719	405	623	416	16,566
Oral Arguments*		1,307		2,176		323		564	4,370
Motions Decided*		5,803		8,671		5,773		8,096	28,343
Admissions to the Bar		2,626		2,735		4,056		348	9,765
Attorney Disciplinary Proceedings Decided		72		217		303		60	652

*Not broken down by civil or criminal.

Appellate Terms

Appellate Terms of the Supreme Court in the First and Second Judicial Departments hear appeals from civil and criminal cases originating in New York City's Civil and Criminal Courts. In the Second Department, the Appellate Terms also hear appeals from civil and criminal cases originating in District, City, and town and village Justice Courts. Justices are selected by the Chief Administrative Judge upon approval of the Presiding Justice of the appropriate Appellate Division. The Appellate Terms' caseload activity is listed in TABLE 3.

	FIRST DEPT			SECOND DEPT			TOTAL
	Civil	Criminal	Total	Civil	Criminal	Total	
Records on Appeal Filed	111	81	192	1,390	836	2,226	2,418
Disposed of before argument or submission (e.g., dismissed, withdrawn, settled):	5	11	16	983	146	1,129	1,145
Disposed of after argument or submission:							
Affirmed	64	68	132	92	42	134	266
Reversed	33	6	39	63	19	82	121
Modified	8	5	13	18	9	27	40
Dismissed	14	1	15	17	3	20	35
Other	-	-	-	11	2	13	13
Total Dispositions	124	91	215	1,184	221	1,405	1,620
Oral Arguments*			152			157	309
Motions Decided*			2,246			6,610	8,856

*Not broken down by civil or criminal.

Trial Courts

In 2025, 2,571,543 cases were filed statewide in the trial courts. Criminal cases accounted for 33.5%. Civil cases accounted for 42.5%. Nearly 20% of the cases were in Family Court and 6% were in Surrogate's Court. TABLE 4 shows total filings in the trial courts over a five-year period. FIGURE A shows the percentage of filings by case type. Figure B shows total filings over the five-year period from 2021 through 2025.

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Criminal					
Supreme and County Courts Criminal ^a	29,670	29,681	35,194	45,118	42,163
Criminal Court of the City of NY ^b	204,957	231,470	296,379	308,765	336,093
City & District Courts Outside NYC ^b	438,742	446,821	488,102	505,339	488,763
Criminal Total	673,369	707,972	819,675	859,222	867,019
Civil					
Supreme Court Civil ^c	354,578	324,600	333,452	321,796	318,292
Civil Court of the City of NY ^d	332,824	380,702	431,794	494,169	460,835
City & District Courts Outside NYC ^d	124,033	140,652	148,474	166,542	164,212
County Courts Civil ^c	97,027	98,294	85,179	77,885	73,929
Court of Claims	1,577	1,258	3,057	1,501	2,001
Small Claims Assessment Review Program	91,426	47,960	63,670	59,511	72,297
Civil Total	1,001,465	993,466	1,065,626	1,121,404	1,091,566
Family^e	384,774	473,738	496,847	499,910	458,021
Surrogate's	139,429	146,396	151,036	154,306	154,937
Total	2,199,037	2,321,572	2,533,184	2,634,842	2,571,543

*This reflects data entry as of 2/20/26.

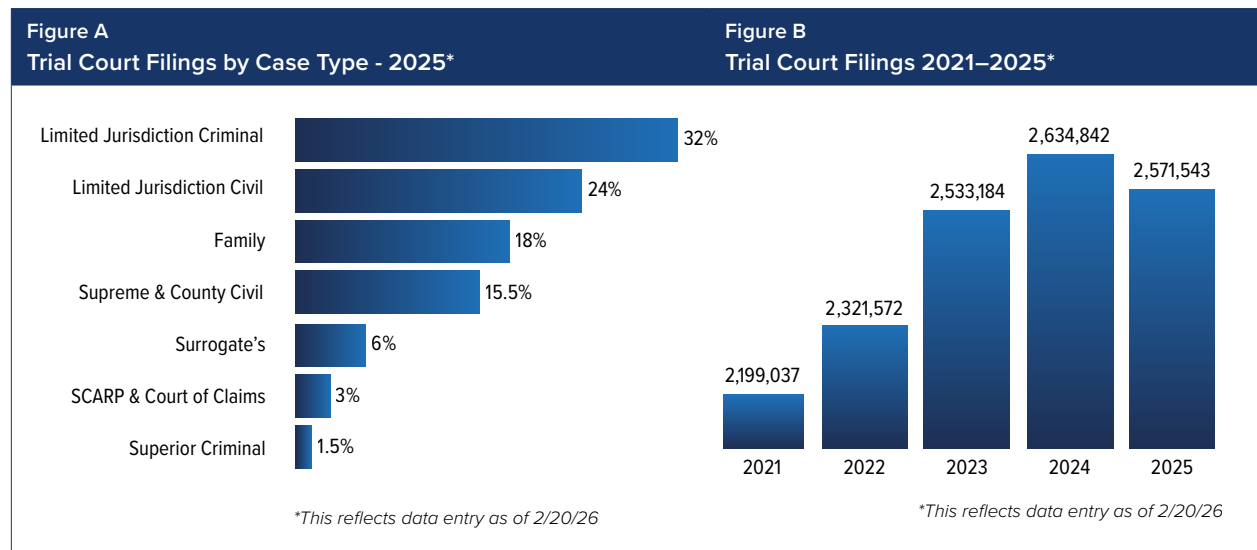
^aIn October 2023, supreme & county criminal data categorization changed from felonies to superior accusatory instruments (all Indictments & SCI's) and misdemeanors to local accusatory instruments (felony youth complaints, integrated domestic violence, & other unindicted cases in supreme & county criminal). Prior to the change, felony youth complaints were not included in reporting.

^bIncludes arrests, uniform traffic & parking tickets that require the court's involvement, and NYC summons cases.

^cIncludes new cases, restored cases, ex parte applications, and uncontested matrimonial cases.

^dIncludes civil, housing, small claims, and commercial claims.

^eIncludes Permanency Planning Hearings held.



Supreme Court

The Supreme Court generally handles cases outside the authority of the lower courts such as civil matters beyond the monetary limits of the lower courts' jurisdiction; divorce, separation and annulment proceedings; equity suits, such as mortgage foreclosures and injunctions; and criminal prosecutions of felonies. During 2025, there were 313,348 civil filings in Supreme Court, including 175,568 new cases, 4,944 cases restored to the calendar, 100,244 ex parte applications, and 37,536 uncontested matrimonial cases. A total of 319,766 matters reached disposition. The Supreme Court's caseload activity is listed in TABLE 5. FIGURE C shows the percentage of filings by case type and FIGURE D shows the breakdown of cases by manner of disposition.

Location	FILINGS		DISPOSITIONS				
	New Cases	Note of Issue	Total	Pre-Note	Note of Issue	Settlements	Verdicts
Total State	175,568	37,554	178,192	142,482	35,710	42,224	2,444
NYC	81,719	19,839	84,327	64,249	20,078	19,351	1,715
Bronx	15,482	3,695	16,549	13,309	3,240	6,991	135
Kings	25,349	6,319	27,890	21,105	6,785	5,620	473
New York	18,502	3,729	18,083	13,500	4,583	3,694	177
Queens	19,212	5,288	18,283	13,546	4,737	2,240	773
Richmond	3,174	808	3,522	2,789	733	806	157
ONYC	93,849	17,715	93,865	78,233	15,632	22,873	729
Albany	3,346	315	3,199	2,950	249	43	1
Allegany	222	22	241	220	21	10	-
Broome	1,429	183	1,356	1,206	150	87	4
Cattaraugus	402	64	406	363	43	62	-
Cayuga	313	38	352	315	37	40	1
Chautauqua	658	16	634	611	23	96	4
Chemung	474	106	395	314	81	8	2
Chenango	225	26	203	175	28	12	1
Clinton	458	24	467	443	24	42	-
Columbia	451	67	456	382	74	33	7
Cortland	198	29	196	180	16	5	-
Delaware	206	27	183	160	23	6	-
Dutchess	2,591	529	2,657	2,147	510	458	17
Erie	7,624	1,110	7,635	6,845	790	2,428	27
Essex	244	18	249	233	16	36	-
Franklin	297	27	286	266	20	47	-
Fulton	341	50	333	283	50	46	1
Genesee	267	29	270	243	27	18	-
Greene	337	55	307	253	54	28	-
Herkimer	331	44	340	315	25	37	-
Jefferson	500	88	458	387	71	29	2
Lewis	69	11	81	73	8	15	-
Livingston	190	27	209	192	17	6	-
Madison	280	47	251	218	33	13	-
Monroe	6,022	717	5,123	4,654	469	222	8
Montgomery	350	31	316	290	26	36	-
Nassau	17,089	4,855	17,456	13,049	4,407	4,285	275
Niagara	1,246	222	1,360	1,183	177	327	7
Oneida	1,741	285	1,665	1,386	279	115	4
Onondaga	2,804	581	2,671	2,222	449	726	10
Ontario	600	89	658	593	65	65	1
Orange	3,376	723	3,462	2,848	614	836	18
Orleans	221	10	223	208	15	25	-
Oswego	513	42	462	406	56	24	-

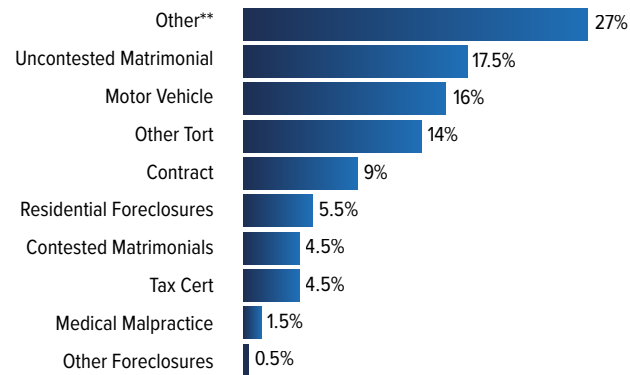
*This reflects data entry as of 2/20/26.

Table 5: Supreme Civil Cases - 2025*

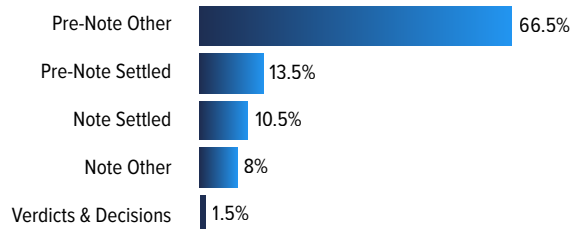
Location	FILINGS		DISPOSITIONS				
	New Cases	Note of Issue	Total	Pre-Note	Note of Issue	Settlements	Verdicts
Total State	175,568	37,554	178,192	142,482	35,710	42,224	2,444
Otsego	284	32	254	215	39	23	2
Putnam	571	104	608	489	119	21	4
Rensselaer	1,463	117	1,312	1,214	98	29	-
Rockland	3,434	599	3,528	3,006	522	983	8
St. Lawrence	484	91	496	421	75	63	2
Saratoga	1,304	219	1,285	1,100	185	225	1
Schenectady	906	147	906	763	143	118	3
Schoharie	196	24	175	152	23	1	-
Schuyler	81	8	69	60	9	1	-
Seneca	148	16	137	125	12	1	-
Steuben	360	72	364	311	53	16	-
Suffolk	16,098	2,588	16,954	14,680	2,274	8,195	201
Sullivan	682	101	623	529	94	28	-
Tioga	201	31	217	184	33	16	-
Tompkins	332	56	361	291	70	7	2
Ulster	1,528	371	1,551	1,192	359	248	10
Warren	415	68	381	337	44	25	-
Washington	703	35	475	446	29	13	-
Wayne	404	76	427	382	45	68	1
Westchester	8,541	2,422	8,875	6,447	2,428	2,486	105
Wyoming	230	25	220	199	21	33	-
Yates	69	6	87	77	10	7	-

*This reflects data entry as of 2/20/26.

**Figure C
Supreme Court Filings by Case Type - 2025***



**Figure D
Supreme Court Disposition by Disposition Type - 2025***



*This reflects data entry as of 2/20/26.

**Other mostly consists of Real Property, Mental Hygiene, and Special Proceedings.

County Courts

County Courts, located in each county outside New York City, handle criminal prosecutions of felonies and misdemeanors committed within the county, although in practice most minor offenses are handled by lower courts. County Courts also have limited jurisdiction over civil lawsuits involving claims up to \$25,000. County Courts in the Third and Fourth Departments, while primarily trial courts, also hear appeals from cases originating in the City Courts and town and village Justice Courts. The statistical data for the County Courts' superior accusatory instrument caseload, which consist of indictments and superior court information (SCI) cases, in combination with the criminal caseload data for Supreme Court are in TABLE 6.

Location	FILINGS			DISPOSITIONS						
	Total	Indictments	SCI's**	Total	Guilty Pleas	Convictions	Acquittals	Nonjury Verdicts	Dismissals	Other
Total State	31,524	22,979	8,545	34,227	29,090	831	167	167	2,493	1,479
NYC	13,371	12,225	1,146	14,508	11,586	412	87	48	1,628	747
Bronx	2,698	2,638	60	2,685	1,889	50	17	1	584	144
Kings	3,570	3,451	119	4,490	3,673	107	22	24	433	231
New York	4,099	3,660	439	4,194	3,308	150	35	10	451	240
Queens	2,456	2,117	339	2,447	2,100	97	13	12	131	94
Richmond	548	359	189	692	616	8		1	29	38
ONYC	18,153	10,754	7,399	19,719	17,504	419	80	119	865	732
Albany	858	526	332	827	739	14	1	1	31	41
Allegany	70	44	26	87	66	1	-	-	12	8
Broome	478	304	174	422	366	13	3	1	23	16
Cattaraugus	237	160	77	343	308	3	-	-	28	4
Cayuga	254	185	69	238	227	3	-	-	6	2
Chautauqua	307	195	112	338	303	4	-	-	17	14
Chemung	283	259	24	280	246	10	1	3	8	12
Chenango	188	172	16	161	149	1	-	-	1	10
Clinton	245	97	148	268	249	4	-	1	5	9
Columbia	95	73	22	82	61	1	1	1	9	9
Cortland	167	105	62	172	143	5	-	-	12	12
Delaware	90	52	38	115	100		-	-	9	6
Dutchess	331	163	168	342	316	5	-	-	9	12
Erie	1,211	572	639	1,347	1,249	20	10	10	36	22
Essex	55	19	36	96	56		-	-	36	4
Franklin	134	103	31	142	119	3	1	-	7	12
Fulton	150	39	111	152	143	1	1	-	-	7
Genesee	243	160	83	240	218	3	-	-	7	12
Greene	88	48	40	87	82	1	-	-	3	1
Hamilton	3	1	2	3	2	1	-	-	-	-
Herkimer	101	46	55	107	99	3	-	-	5	-
Jefferson	346	151	195	410	398	5	-	1	5	1
Lewis	45	20	25	50	47	3	-	-	-	-
Livingston	152	119	33	174	150	1	1	-	14	8
Madison	110	34	76	129	123	-	-	-	4	2
Monroe	1,362	1,089	273	1,666	1,331	66	26	35	123	85
Montgomery	150	55	95	173	163	5	1		1	3
Nassau	1,290	597	693	1,478	1,310	44	8	10	71	35

*This reflects data entry as of 2/25/26.

**Superior Court Information.

Table 6: Supreme Criminal & County Court - Superior Accusatory Instruments (Indictments and SCI's) 2025*

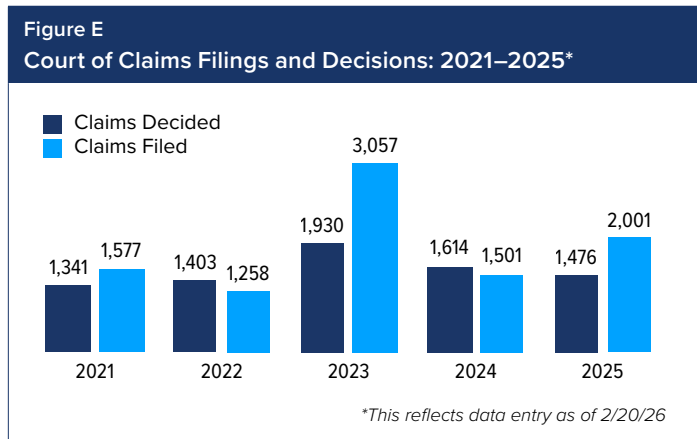
Location	FILINGS			DISPOSITIONS						
	Total	Indictments	SCI's**	Total	Guilty Pleas	Convictions	Acquittals	Nonjury Verdicts	Dismissals	Other
Total State	31,524	22,979	8,545	34,227	29,090	831	167	167	2,493	1,479
Niagara	394	223	171	423	382	19	2	1	15	4
Oneida	554	389	165	506	461	7	3	-	23	12
Onondaga	995	610	385	1,061	899	35	5	3	63	56
Ontario	270	123	147	280	246	6	4	5	15	4
Orange	515	337	178	588	547	9	-	1	10	21
Orleans	47	28	19	51	48	-	-	-	2	1
Oswego	221	132	89	263	234	2	1	-	11	15
Otsego	76	49	27	99	80	5	3	-	8	3
Putnam	78	26	52	103	95	1	-	-	4	3
Rensselaer	214	155	59	225	196	2	-	-	11	16
Rockland	296	199	97	346	312	4	-	6	8	16
St. Lawrence	270	192	78	333	283	4	1	2	14	29
Saratoga	328	64	264	354	346	3	-	1	3	1
Schenectady	283	179	104	314	278	15	1	1	8	11
Schoharie	47	19	28	44	39	2	-	-	2	1
Schuyler	64	47	17	64	55	2	-	5	1	1
Seneca	103	34	69	101	90	-	-	-	7	4
Steuben	437	404	33	464	302	8	2	10	97	45
Suffolk	1,641	1,064	577	1,726	1,613	30	1	4	28	50
Sullivan	180	112	68	157	146	3	-	-	7	1
Tioga	88	44	44	113	90	4	-	10	4	5
Tompkins	161	76	85	180	153	3	1	1	4	18
Ulster	298	169	129	295	270	8	-	-	4	13
Warren	124	33	91	161	151	1	-	-	-	9
Washington	128	103	25	152	136	2	-	-	5	9
Wayne	171	91	80	178	159	-	-	3	5	11
Westchester	900	319	581	936	882	17	2	3	14	18
Wyoming	175	108	67	223	207	5	-	-	6	5
Yates	52	37	15	50	41	2	-	-	4	3

*This reflects data entry as of 2/25/26.

**Superior Court Information.

Court of Claims

The Court of Claims is a statewide court with exclusive authority over lawsuits involving monetary claims against the State of New York or certain other state-related entities such as the New York State Thruway, the City University of New York and the New York State Power Authority (claims for the appropriation of real property only). The Court hears cases at nine locations around the State. During 2025, 2,001 claims were filed and 1,476 were decided. FIGURE E shows total claims filed and decided over the five-year period from 2021 through 2025.



Surrogate's Court

The Surrogate's Court, located in every county of the State, hears cases involving the affairs of the deceased, including the validity of wills and the administration of estates. These courts are also authorized to handle adoption and guardianships. See TABLE 7 for 2025 filings and dispositions by case type.

Case Type	TOTAL STATE		NYC		OUTSIDE NYC	
	Filings	Dispositions**	Filings	Dispositions**	Filings	Dispositions**
Total	154,937	125,817	38,348	40,298	116,589	85,519
Probate	38,435	42,234	10,373	11,252	28,062	30,982
Administration	21,789	25,752	9,009	10,943	12,780	14,809
Voluntary Admin.	31,786	31,786	9,546	9,546	22,240	22,240
Accounting	31,913	4,567	3,151	1,627	28,762	2,940
Inter Vivos Trust	1,618	1,500	226	425	1,392	1,075
Miscellaneous	9,561	8,802	3,131	4,113	6,430	4,689
Guardianship	19,218	9,852	2,835	2,250	16,383	7,602
Adoption	606	1,308	75	139	531	1,169
Estate Tax	11	16	2	3	9	13

*This reflects data entry as of 2/20/26.

**Includes orders and decrees signed.

Family Court

The Family Court, located in each county outside New York City and citywide in the City, hears matters involving children and families, including adoption, guardianship, foster care approval and review, juvenile delinquency, family violence, child abuse and neglect, custody and visitation, and child support. See TABLE 8 for a breakdown of 2025 Family Court filings and dispositions. This table also contains filings and dispositions for the State's Integrated Domestic Violence (IDV) Courts.

Type of Petition	TOTAL STATE		NYC		OUTSIDE NYC	
	Filings	Dispositions	Filings	Dispositions	Filings	Dispositions
Total	458,021	473,591	141,135	151,418	316,886	322,173
Termination of Parental Rights	2,295	2,382	540	512	1,755	1,870
Surrender of Child	1,526	1,531	204	205	1,322	1,326
Child Protective (Neglect & Abuse)	25,225	25,378	6,868	7,188	18,357	18,190
Juvenile Delinquency	11,830	11,784	5,319	5,341	6,511	6,443
Designated Felony	509	386	323	213	186	173
Persons in Need of Supervision	582	519	56	20	526	499
Adoption	1,966	2,103	671	714	1,295	1,389
Adoption Certification	84	82	19	21	65	61
Guardianship	17,919	21,935	10,594	12,338	7,325	9,597
Custody/Visitation	149,337	152,008	36,953	38,416	112,384	113,592
Foster Care Review	201	195	145	136	56	59
Foster Care Placement	275	237	204	162	71	75
Family Offense	68,374	67,576	22,820	22,916	45,554	44,660
Paternity	15,165	16,301	5,862	6,897	9,303	9,404
Support	130,248	137,929	36,766	41,967	93,482	95,962
Uniform Interstate Family Support Act	4,742	5,290	1,856	2,457	2,886	2,833
Other	451	663	148	128	303	535
Permanency Planning Hearings Held	27,292	27,292	11,787	11,787	15,505	15,505

*This reflects data entry as of 2/20/26.

Civil Court of the City of New York

The Civil Court of the City of New York has jurisdiction over civil cases involving amounts up to \$25,000. It includes small claims and commercial claims parts for the informal resolution of matters involving amounts up to \$5,000, and a housing part presided over by judges designated by the Chief Administrator for landlord-tenant proceedings. New York City Civil Court Judges are elected to 10-year terms; housing judges are appointed to five-year terms. TABLE 9 shows the breakdown of 2025 filings and dispositions by case type and county.

Location	CIVIL ACTIONS		HOUSING		SMALL CLAIMS		COMMERCIAL CLAIMS	
	Filing ^a	Dispositions	Filing ^a	Dispositions	Filing	Dispositions	Filing	Dispositions
New York City	309,961	238,357	132,783	119,590	14,708	16,131	3,383	3,705
New York	39,008	18,908	25,809	22,323	3,474	3,389	649	933
Bronx	43,730	42,366	45,294	39,441	2,405	3,340	626	551
Kings	60,202	51,153	36,272	33,016	4,204	3,811	655	671
Queens	60,830	52,372	22,149	21,965	3,894	4,878	1,135	1,205
Richmond	106,191	73,558	3,259	2,845	731	713	318	345

* This reflects data entry as of 2/20/26.

^a Includes both answered and unanswered cases.

Criminal Court of the City of New York

The Criminal Court of the City of New York handles misdemeanors and violations. New York City Criminal Court Judges also conduct felony arraignments and other preliminary (pre-indictment) felony proceedings. They are appointed by the mayor to 10-year terms. During 2025, 76% of the arrests were misdemeanors, with 19% of all cases reaching disposition by plea. Another 72% were dismissed; 7% were sent to the grand jury; and 2% were disposed of by other means. TABLE 10 shows 2025 filings and dispositions by county for arrest cases, summons cases (cases in which an appearance ticket, returnable in court, is issued to the defendant), uniform traffic tickets, and parking tickets that require the court's involvement.

Location	ARREST CASES		SUMMONS CASES		TRAFFIC & PARKING TICKETS	
	Filings	Dispositions	Filings**	Dispositions	Filings	Dispositions
New York City	194,877	190,414	103,406	101,270	37,810	36,554
New York	42,557	40,968	31,377	29,635	2,116	2,187
Bronx	35,128	33,780	20,197	19,220	5,816	5,462
Kings	62,778	61,313	26,777	26,511	17,966	17,279
Queens	45,596	45,541	19,758	20,461	8,706	8,590
Richmond	8,818	8,812	5,297	5,443	3,206	3,036

* This reflects data entry as of 2/20/26.

** Includes both answered and unanswered cases.

City Courts Outside New York City

City Courts Outside New York City arraign felonies and handle misdemeanor and lesser offenses, as well as civil lawsuits involving claims up to \$15,000. City Courts also have small claims parts for the informal disposition of matters involving claims up to \$5,000 and/or housing parts to handle landlord-tenant matters and housing violations.

District Courts

District Courts, located in Nassau County and the five western towns of Suffolk County, arraign felonies and handle misdemeanors and lesser offenses as well as civil lawsuits involving claims up to \$15,000. In 2025, there were a total of 652,975 filings and 645,590 dispositions in the City and District Courts. TABLE 11 contains a breakdown of filings by location and case type. FIGURE F shows filings by case type. FIGURE G shows total filings over the five-year period from 2021 through 2025.

Table 11: City and District Courts: Filings by Case Type - 2025*							Total Filings: 652,975
Location	Criminal	MV	Parking	Civil	Small Claims	L&T	Commercial
Total	161,283	315,040	12,440	95,620	12,932	51,438	4,222
Albany	4,161	16,905	76	1,904	520	2,427	79
Amsterdam	1,182	1,868	71	307	58	282	8
Auburn	959	2,014	166	437	92	386	27
Batavia	825	1,968	4	289	36	202	18
Beacon	279	1,131	110	223	52	104	22
Binghamton	3,467	6,199	12	665	277	850	57
Buffalo	8,036	3,961	20	3,136	1,257	7,588	434
Canandaigua	341	3,275	26	434	57	72	6
Cohoes	866	2,410	7	244	50	438	6
Corning	494	776	22	167	35	127	4
Cortland	1,249	1,990	2	139	64	204	25
Dunkirk	711	1,078	91	212	41	66	20
Elmira	1,809	1,826	3	455	133	524	9
Fulton	792	2,177	1	184	60	118	34
Geneva	527	1,360	51	120	23	135	1
Glen Cove	597	3,643	4,193	10	29	124	3
Glens Falls	877	1,417	201	336	53	117	10
Gloversville	793	1,592	50	448	58	296	8
Hornell	430	1,163	1	112	23	91	4
Hudson	379	1,017	7	213	51	41	33
Ithaca	2,799	2,225	59	73	129	167	22
Jamestown	2,801	2,737	392	340	125	243	24
Johnstown	489	947	6	161	29	74	5
Kingston	1,344	6,911	39	325	123	290	40
Lackawanna	618	5,700	84	483	135	202	28
Little Falls	120	409		116	98	26	18
Lockport	998	2,115	39	708	106	233	52
Long Beach	2,225	2,707	2,148	58	32	115	1
Mechanicville	573	887	2	93	51	77	23
Middletown	2,435	6,042	335	737	202	281	29
Mount Vernon	2,783	7,643	26	544	160	1,483	19
New Rochelle	1,978	6,324	83	1,250	187	1,153	27
Newburgh	2,838	5,447	41	591	162	448	30
Niagara Falls	2,448	8,033	1,253	1,122	167	941	32
North Tonawanda	1,107	7,835	5	316	74	122	25
Norwich	464	721	2	158	29	68	6
Ogdensburg	663	737	1	114	76	74	59
Olean	1,093	1,453	2	181	51	135	3
Oneida	757	2,419	2	78	45	71	10
Oneonta	487	1,164	5	67	68	66	22

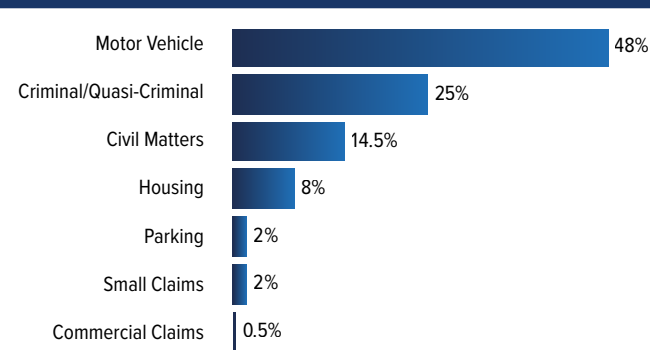
*This reflects data entry as of 2/20/26.

Table 11: City and District Courts: Filings by Case Type - 2025* Total Filings: 652,975

Location	Criminal	MV	Parking	Civil	Small Claims	L&T	Commercial
Total	161,283	315,040	12,440	95,620	12,932	51,438	4,222
Oswego	1,570	4,333	2	268	91	151	17
Peekskill	1,806	5,113	88	285	98	272	26
Plattsburgh	962	2,346	7	267	97	207	36
Port Jervis	977	2,280	11	228	39	101	4
Poughkeepsie	2,120	2,929	1,374	688	212	913	57
Rensselaer	256	972	2	300	32	109	11
Rochester	5,974	2,832	18	1,947	1,211	5,668	251
Rome	1,694	6,487	7	634	103	491	7
Rye	670	4,346	36	32	51	10	20
Salamanca	571	1,539	2	82	35	64	9
Saratoga Springs	1,343	5,387	24	322	164	399	38
Schenectady	4,496	9,645	72	1,271	239	1,689	30
Sherrill	28	74	-	65	13	6	5
Syracuse	7,588	12,688	16	2,797	612	2,836	93
Tonawanda	662	4,440	92	408	148	69	47
Troy	1,665	5,110	10	1,343	154	1,568	23
Utica	3,395	7,712	9	935	176	1,114	115
Watertown	1,650	2,777	6	435	108	564	45
Watervliet	605	3,633	10	312	45	327	-
White Plains	2,696	11,592	74	308	276	493	87
Yonkers	4,819	14,851	97	1,447	313	3,457	180
Nassau District	26,604	42,902	206	16,084	1,763	3,946	1,017
Suffolk District	31,338	30,826	639	47,612	1,934	6,523	821

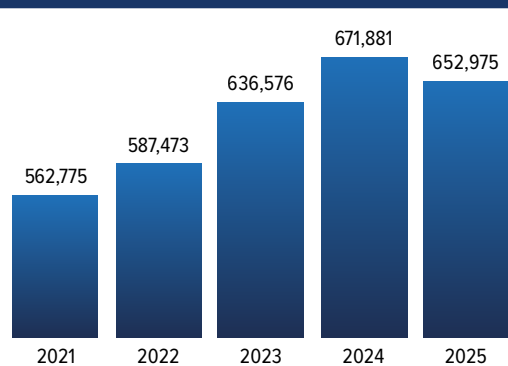
*This reflects data entry as of 2/20/26.

Figure F
City & District Court Filings by Case Type - 2025*



*This reflects data entry as of 2/20/26

Figure G
City & District Court Filings 2021–2025*



*This reflects data entry as of 2/20/26

Town and Village Courts

Town and Village Justice Courts handle misdemeanors and lesser offenses as well as civil lawsuits involving claims up to \$3,000 (including small claims cases). While most cases handled by these courts are minor traffic offenses, drunk-driving cases and zoning violations, town and village Justices also arraign felonies and handle misdemeanors. There are 1,174 Justice Courts and 1,698 Town and Village Justices.





This report was produced and edited by the Communications Department of the NYS Unified Court System.

Al Baker, Director
John Caher
Arlene Hackel
David Handschuh
Nick Inverso
Rena Micklewright

Court officials tour the future Harlem Community Justice Center on E. 121st St.

