

NEW YORK STATE
UNIFIED COURT SYSTEM

2020 ANNUAL REPORT







New York State Unified Court System

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Report of the Chief Administrator of the Courts
for the Calendar Year January 1 through December 31, 2020

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A MESSAGE FROM THE Chief Administrative Judge

From her first days in office, Chief Judge DiFiore has nurtured a rise-to-the-occasion ethos of excellence within the court system. That culture was put to the test in 2020 when COVID-19 made it utterly impossible to carry out business as usual and severely hindered the ability of all enterprises, large and small, public and private, to fulfill their goals and mission. In the Court System, we all had to think on our feet and adjust to a day-by-day, and sometimes hour-by-hour, shift in dynamics and protocols.

Despite the enormous hurdles, we are immensely proud to report that the New York Courts remained open throughout the crisis. Although some operations were greatly limited and, at first, restricted to emergency and essential matters, the New York Courts never shut down. The halls of justice remained open to serve the people of this state. That is the Excellence Initiative, and the foundation on which it rests, in action.

This annual report reflects the enormous efforts by the Third Branch of government to fulfill the critical needs of the citizenry in a time of unprecedented challenge. In a year such as 2020, just maintaining some semblance of the status quo would have been a remarkable achievement. But we did more than that, much more. We advanced the interests of justice in significant ways, while also confronting head-on the fact that the Court System, like all social institutions, has yet to fully achieve the goal of eradicating bias and discrimination.

We submit this report with pride in what the Unified Court System has achieved, and everlasting gratitude to the extraordinary people who made those achievements possible.

Sincerely,

Lawrence K. Marks

This 2020 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.



Prospective grand jurors maintain a safe distance while waiting to enter New York City Criminal Court, NY County.



“The business of the New York courts must and will continue during this national crisis as we provide essential services to the best of our abilities, while safeguarding the health and safety of our workforce, our families and the public”

Chief Judge Janet DiFiore

March 17, 2020

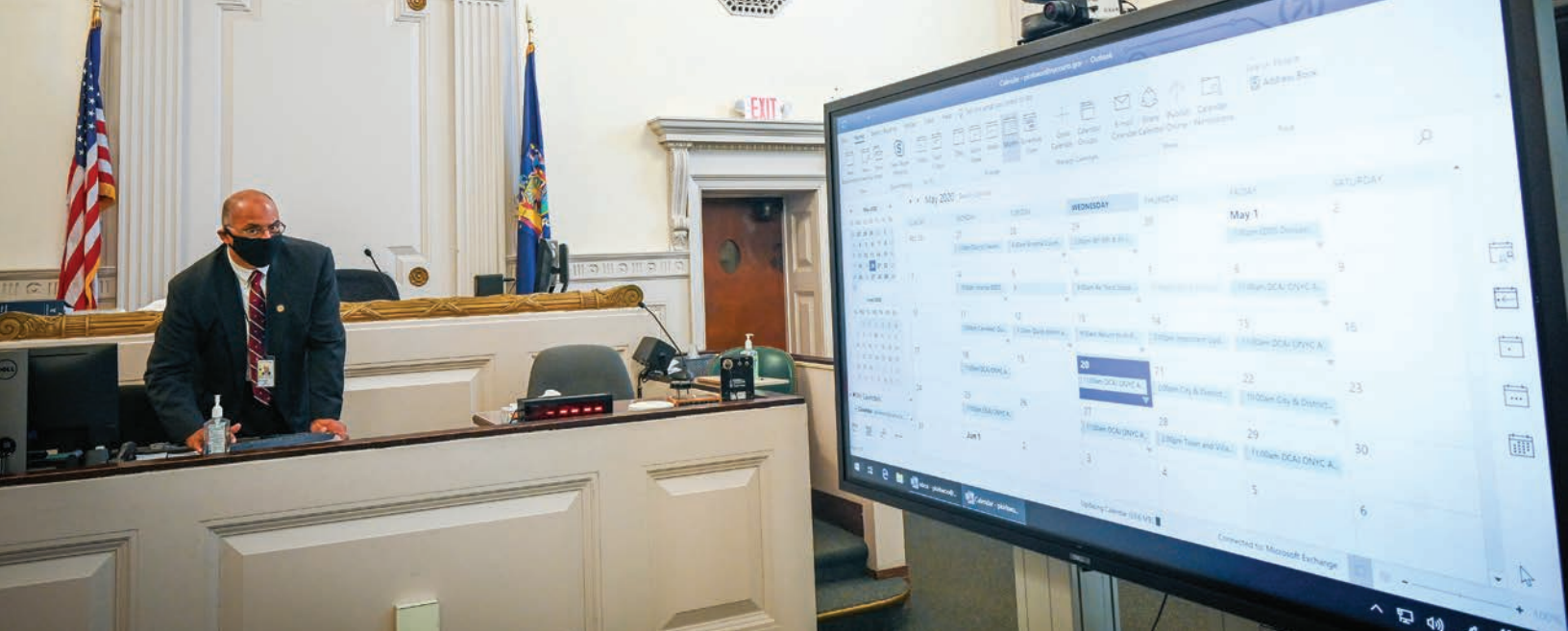
Covid-19 and the Courts

The COVID-19 pandemic hammered New York State, affecting every aspect of life with an intensity that was unprecedented. By March 7th, when Governor Cuomo declared a state of emergency, two things were clear: closing the courts was not an option, and the court system needed to make dramatic changes in the way it operated. New Yorkers rely on their courts for vital services, and the courts never stopped hearing emergency and essential matters or delivering justice services at any point in the pandemic.

On March 11th, the court system responded to the first confirmed COVID cases in our state by restricting courthouse entry by high-risk individuals. Shortly thereafter, court administrators suspended jury operations and high-volume civil parts, and directed that court business be conducted by video and telephonic conference. On March 16th, the court system temporarily postponed all non-essential court functions, and consolidated essential and emergency matters in a limited number of courthouses. These steps were taken to reduce foot traffic and prevent further spread of the virus as it became clear that New York was then the epicenter of this pandemic.

By the following week, virtual court parts were opened in the high-volume New York City Criminal and Family Courts to hear essential and emergency matters, and by April 6th, all essential and emergency matters across the state were being heard virtually. Non-essential matters were added back to calendars the following week, with courts throughout the state conducting virtual conferences and working on caseloads in a manner that minimized foot traffic in courthouses. The story of 2020 is the transformation of the court system from a traditional in-person model to a virtual court system, accomplished with remarkable speed thanks to technology and e-filing, and to the dedication and resilience of the judges and staff of the court system.

Even as the virtual courts increased their efficiency and productivity, the court system sought to return safely to in-person operations on an appropriately limited basis. The preparation was methodical – retrofitting courtrooms for safe distancing, implementing COVID-19 screening and temperature checks, ensuring strict use of PPE and putting in place rigorous cleaning practices. Beginning in May and continuing over the summer and early fall, courthouses were gradually reopened, staffing levels increased and a range of in-person proceedings resumed, including a number of jury trials. When the virus made a resurgence, however, the decision was made in November to pause most in-person operations and reduce in-person staffing levels, a condition that persisted through the end of 2020.



2020 Virtual Courts

562,088	Virtual Conferences
184,838	Outcomes or Dispositions
73,049	Motions Decided
137,986	Virtual Arraignments
949,955	Family Court Virtual Appearances

The accomplishments of the virtual courts are impressive, not only because this model enabled the court system to continue to function under extraordinarily challenging circumstances. As judges, court staff, lawyers and litigants adjusted to this new way of operating, the productivity of virtual courts grew. By the end of 2020, judges in virtual courts had conducted 562,088 virtual conferences, reached outcomes or dispositions in 184,838 matters, and decided 73,049 motions. Between April and the end of December 2020, New York City courts conducted 56,725 virtual arraignments, and

city and district courts outside New York City conducted 81,261 arraignments. Between March and the end of December, there were 949,955 virtual appearances in Family Court. In November and December 2020, there were 3,857 virtual trials and evidentiary and fact-finding hearings. The success of the virtual court system is a truly outstanding accomplishment.

As a result of the dramatic negative fiscal impact of the pandemic, New York State is facing an unprecedented budget deficit. The court system has not been spared, absorbing a reduction in planned spending of nearly \$300 million for the current fiscal year, or 10% of the current budget. In addition to absorbing unplanned expenses for extensive purchases of PPE, installing plexiglass barriers and adopting other safety measures in courthouses across the state, the court system was forced to make difficult decisions in order to achieve this reduction in spending. These included imposing a strict hiring freeze; deferring certain payments into the future; eliminating all non-essential discretionary spending; suspending our JHO program; and, for this year, denying all but three of the applications of Supreme Court Justices who requested certification to remain on the bench for additional two-year terms beyond age 70. Together these actions have achieved the necessary reduction to the current year's spending, without layoffs of any court staff. The hiring freeze, however, has resulted in hundreds of fewer court employees by the end of 2020, as positions that became empty through attrition were not filled. The FY 2022 zero-growth budget submitted by the court system in December is expected to reduce staffing further through attrition to levels not seen since the 1990's.



Covid-19 *and the Courts*

A TIMELINE

JANUARY

- WHO announces mysterious, rapidly spreading virus in China on January 9.
- U.S. reports first case (Washington State) on January 21.
- WHO declares global health emergency on January 31.

FEBRUARY

- UCS assesses capacity for remote operations, securing personal protective equipment, developing safety protocols.

MARCH

- First confirmed case in NYS (Manhattan) on March 1.
- Governor Cuomo declares state of emergency after 89 confirmed cases on March 7.
- UCS restricts access to courthouses for persons at high risk of COVID-19 infection on March 11.
- President Trump announces national emergency on March 12.
- Chief Administrative Judge Marks issues Administrative Order postponing all but essential proceedings.
- UCS declares moratorium on evictions, postpones new jury trials, suspends high-traffic civil courts, begins to conduct court business by video.
- Non-essential UCS personnel directed to stay home.



- Court of Appeals hears socially distanced oral arguments in Albany.
- Video arraignments begin in NYC Criminal Court.
- Chief Administrative Judge issues Administrative Orders extending temporary orders of protection.
- Governor issues Executive Order suspending and tolling statutes of limitations and filing periods.
- Chief Administrative Judge issues Administrative Order restricting filings to essential matters.
- Chief Judge DiFiore advises judges and staff that the courts will remain open—if only virtually—for essential business.
- Governor directs all non-essential workers to work from home.
- NYC Criminal Court begins virtual operations.
- NYC Family Court begins virtual operations.
- Chief Judge announces expansion of virtual court operations to courts outside NYC.

APRIL

- Court system and NYS Bar Association marshal resources to meet the need for pro bono civil legal services in pandemic-related legal matters.
- Virtual courts up and running statewide.
- In first week of virtual operations, 8,000 matters conferenced, 2,600 cases disposed of and 1,400 written decisions issued.
- NYC Family Court expands to five virtual intake court parts to handle increased volume.
- July NYS Bar Exam postponed until September.
- Appellate courts begin virtual court operations.

MAY

- After four weeks of virtual operations, court system reports conducting nearly 40,000 conferences, settling a third of the cases and issuing 9,000 written decisions.
- Chief Judge announces plans for phased re-opening.
- Chief Judge announces expansion of virtual court operations, including e-filing and ADR.
- Chief Judge announces Surrogate's Court pro bono partnership with New York State Bar Association.
- Chief Judge forecasts a "new normal" as facilities gradually re-open, with safeguards to reduce traffic and ensure compliance with safety standards.
- Governor clears five upstate regions to begin phased re-opening of economic activity.
- Chief Judge announces resumption of in-person court operations in 40 upstate counties.
- Chief Administrative Judge authorizes new electronically filed lawsuits in re-opened regions.
- Problem-solving courts authorized to begin virtual court conferences.
- Governor orders moratorium on eviction of COVID-19 impacted residences and businesses.



JUNE

- Limited in-person court operations resume in every region outside NYC.
- Court of Appeals conducts June session with mix of in-person and virtual oral arguments; proceedings available online in real time.
- Court Officer Sergeant Darrell Cross, after a nearly fatal bout with COVID-19 and a full month on ventilation, is released from rehab to cheering but distanced supporters.
- Judges and designated staff in all five boroughs of NYC return to courthouses.
- Unrepresented litigants are provided technology resources and courthouse space to access essential services.
- Chief Judge announces Commission to Reimagine the Future of New York's Courts, led by former NYSBA President Henry Greenberg, to offer short- and long-term recommendations on court operations going forward.
- NYC Family Court adds 14 new virtual parts for a total of 25 parts, handling primarily neglect and abuse, family offenses and child support proceedings.
- Evictions remain suspended, with virtual settlement conferencing authorized where both parties represented by counsel.
- Safe Harbor Act creates legislative moratorium on residential evictions.

JULY

- Courts outside NYC bring back additional nonjudicial staff to support the expansion of in-person matters.
- NYC courts install plexiglass barriers and retrofit courtrooms for safety.
- Virtual Resolution Parts created in NYC Housing Court to hear pre-pandemic cases where both sides are represented by counsel.
- NYC Civil Court begins virtual conferences in commercial landlord-tenant cases.
- In all 57 counties outside NYC, grand jurors report for service.
- NYC Criminal Court has conducted nearly 19,000 arraignments, over 34,000 additional proceedings and 600 preliminary hearings since mid-March.
- Supreme Court, Criminal Term, has conducted 11,360 virtual proceedings citywide.
- Statewide, New York courts have conferenced over 130,000 non-essential matters and settled or disposed of more than one-third of that number.
- Jury trials resume around the state with restart of a felony trial in Cortland County, a murder trial in Bronx County, and a medical malpractice trial in Suffolk County.
- As COVID-19 cases prompt cancellation of September NYS Bar Exam, New York announces it will participate in the October online bar exam.





AUGUST

- Nearly half of the backlogged tort cases in Bronx, Queens and Richmond Counties are referred to ADR; the other half are offered a Virtual Summary Trial.
- Court system has heard over 160,000 essential and emergency matters, mostly virtual, since the pandemic struck.
- Grand jurors begin reporting for service in all boroughs of NYC.
- Outside NYC, over 100 grand juries empaneled.
- In-person bench trials begin in NYC Housing Court on Staten Island, with lawyers and litigants able to opt for a virtual trial.
- NYC Civil Court initiates virtual mediation and trials for small claims matters.
- NYC Family Court opens three new virtual intake parts, two to handle the increased number of family offenses and the third to handle emergency hearings.
- NYS Board of Law Examiners announces reciprocal acceptance of bar exam scores in the October online bar exam from New Jersey, Connecticut and Massachusetts.
- Initiatives to provide access to virtual courts include Fourth Judicial District opening kiosks in courthouse entrances and Third Judicial District offering virtual Help Centers.

SEPTEMBER

- UCS virtual 9/11 ceremony honors Captain William "Harry" Thompson, Sergeants Mitchel Wallace and Thomas Jurgens and other first responders.
- Pilot jury trials begin in 13 upstate counties.
- Appellate Term, First Department resumes in-person oral arguments in retrofitted courtroom at New York County Courthouse.
- Virtual summary bench trials go forward in Supreme Court in New York, Queens and Bronx Counties.
- Virtual court capacity expands to include pilot virtual bench trials and hearings in matrimonial matters in five counties.
- Grand juries empaneled across the state with percentage of grand jurors reporting for service at close to pre-COVID rates.

OCTOBER

- Jury trial pilots outside NYC expand; NYC readies for jury trials.
- Ninth Judicial District's Faith Based Court Access Initiative addresses digital divide with remote access sites enabling litigants to access court resources and legal services.
- Virtual ADR plays increased role, with approximately 20,000 matters settled through ADR from April through September.
- October 5-6: New York State Bar Exam administered online to 5,100 candidates.
- Jury trial pilots begin in civil cases in NYC with trials scheduled in all five boroughs.



NOVEMBER

- Plans to expand jury trials frustrated by increasing COVID-19 infection rate.
- Virtual courts and e-filing further expanded with COVID-19 resurgence.
- NYC Family Court operates 11 virtual intake parts and 29 virtual courtrooms to handle time-sensitive cases of neglect and abuse, family offenses and juvenile delinquency matters.
- Chief Judge announces pause in most in-person operations due to surging infection rate.
- Court system announces partnership with Center for Court Innovation to address digital divide by opening remote access sites for unrepresented litigants.
- Virtual Adoption Day celebrations held across the state.

DECEMBER

- Chief Judge DiFiore states that ongoing hiring freeze will reduce court system employment to 2009 levels by next fiscal year.
- With continued rise in COVID-19 positivity rate, in-person staffing reduced to 40% or less outside NYC and 30% or less in NYC.
- 35 Supreme Court and Acting Supreme Court Justices volunteer to help the NYC Family Court resolve pending child support and visitation cases.
- After training disrupted by pandemic, entire Court Officers Academy class graduates, providing NYC courts with 179 new court officers.





Chief Judge Janet DiFiore receives the New York State Bar Association Distinguished Jurist Award at the NYSBA Judicial Section luncheon at the Hilton Hotel in New York City. Standing beside her is Justice James P. Murphy, Administrative Judge, Fifth Judicial District.

The Excellence Initiative

“The Excellence Initiative has been—by every measure—a resounding success. Thanks to the hard work and commitment of our judges and court staff, and the support and cooperation of the bar, we have cut our backlogs dramatically all across the state.”

Chief Judge Janet DiFiore

At her investiture in 2016, Chief Judge DiFiore established as the Unified Court System’s foremost administrative priority the Excellence Initiative, a detailed, comprehensive and ongoing evaluation of all court processes and procedures to determine what is working well and what needs improvement. The initiative is an evidence-based approach that rejects satisfaction with the status quo, encourages creativity and demands accountability. It is a recognition, on a daily basis, that the cases filed in our state courts have profound consequences not only for the parties in a given litigation, but for the well-being of our communities.



Justin Barry, Chief Clerk of New York City Criminal Court, receives the National Center for State Courts 2020 Warren E. Burger Award for Excellence in Court Administration. From left: Chief Administrative Judge Marks; Chief Judge DiFiore; Justin Barry; Judge Tamiko Amaker, Administrative Judge, New York City Criminal Court and Mary McQueen, President of the National Center for State Courts

The pandemic provided an opportunity to demonstrate the efficacy of the Excellence Initiative’s core principles in the novel area of crisis response. Each strategic and tactical step of the court system in addressing the virus, in both the initial reduction and consolidation of court operations in March 2020 and the phased resumption of broader operations in April and after, has been driven by the close review of safety and performance metrics. Throughout the crisis, the Chief Judge, Chief Administrative Judge and senior court administrators have reviewed and discussed daily reports on a wide range of operational issues, including emergency applications, motions, criminal arrests, bail applications, family court applications, filings by electronic means, juror statistics, trials and others, as well as rates of COVID incidence and other health and safety statistics. This data-driven decision-making allows the court system’s response to the crisis to be optimally informed, nuanced and flexible. We fully expect a resumption of the more traditional goals of the Excellence Initiative—reduced backlogs and efficient use of resources—as operations return to normal.



A tech crew brings video conferencing equipment into Judge Ann Scherzer's courtroom in New York Supreme Court, Criminal Term on July 14, 2020.

Technology

The role of technology, and specifically the court system's Division of Technology and Court Research (DOT), was central to accomplishing the abrupt shift from in-person to virtual operation in the COVID-19 crisis. DOT made possible this shift to virtual court operations by developing, upgrading and supporting database, internet, and programming applications in real time. An abbreviated list of accomplishments includes:

- Expansion of the appearance notification system to send mass notifications to parties via letter/text/voice/email for case postponements, extensions of temporary orders of protection, juror notices and other matters.
- Development of a text notification system to reduce court foot traffic and allow safe staggering of court visitors during in-person court appearance.
- Shipment of over 3,000 laptops, 500 desktops and 2,000 printers, scanners, headsets and cameras to employees to support remote work.
- Development of tools to automate the creation and management of over 6,000 secure SSLVPN accounts, and conversion of all VPN users to two-factor authentication, greatly improving network security.
- Implementation of a new "Bench View" website, enabling judges to securely view case highlights and associated documents.
- Development of an automated online system for the filing with the Office of Court Administration of attorney retention and closing statements as required by the Appellate Division, First and Second Departments. The new system eliminates the need for mail or in-person filings and facilitates the storage and later location of those statements.
- Transition of online videoconferencing of both court proceedings and court staff meetings and other communication from Microsoft Skype for Business to Microsoft Teams, with substantially improved audiovisual quality and functionality.

e-Filing

As New York's courts successfully transitioned from an in-person to a virtual model in the COVID-19 pandemic, e-filing was a critical factor in providing litigants safe and reliable access to the courts. The New York State Courts Electronic Filing System (NYSCEF) has been in existence since 1999, and in that time more than 3 million cases have been filed electronically by 143,000 individuals, including 16,822 pro se users. E-filing through NYSCEF is currently authorized in 60 Supreme Courts, 54 Surrogate's Courts, the Court of Claims and the Appellate Division, and has also expanded to the high-volume New York City Housing Court.



**2.7 million cases
filed since 1999**

Despite the challenges of 2020, NYSCEF implemented e-filing programs in eight Supreme Courts and five Surrogate's Courts in addition to the expansion to New York City Housing Court. However, there was an urgent need for all courts to function virtually. The Electronic Document Delivery System (EDDS) was created to securely transmit documents to courts that do not accommodate the filing of documents through NYSCEF, as NYSCEF may not yet be available or is not yet statutorily permitted. This system is available in 320 individual courts statewide.

Additionally, using the EDDS platform, the court system successfully implemented a video transfer program enabling the saving and dissemination of preliminary hearings on felony complaints. A "virtual evidence room" allows participants in a hearing, trial or conference to send evidence and exhibits to a court remotely.



Chief Judge Janet DiFiore delivers the 2020 State of the Judiciary at the Court of Appeals in Albany.

Presumptive ADR

“We are changing the culture to make presumptive early ADR the accepted norm in our civil courts. And we are excited by the way in which judges, lawyers and litigants are embracing mandatory ADR and recognizing the value of promoting early settlements and having a full range of options available.”

Chief Judge DiFiore

The Presumptive Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Program, a statewide initiative in which most civil cases will be referred to ADR processes for the early opportunity to resolve matters, has been an important part of the Chief Judge’s Excellence Initiative. This year, ADR has taken on critical importance as judges and staff have relied on virtual ADR to great effect to resolve cases and move their dockets forward. Settlement rates have been consistent with our in-person models. Of the nearly 20,000 civil and family disputes referred to virtual mediation in Community Dispute Resolution Centers (CDRC), 73% were successfully settled. In Monroe County, a mediation program for civil and commercial cases in Supreme Court has successfully settled nearly 80% of the 200-plus cases referred. In the Monroe, Broome and Erie County Family Courts, presumptive mediation of custody and visitation cases is off to a promising start, with a 75% settlement rate. In New York City, mediation programs have been initiated in Supreme Court in the Bronx and Manhattan, and mediation in matrimonial cases has been introduced in Manhattan and expanded in Brooklyn and Queens. In New York City Small Claims Court, 730 cases have been referred for free mediation with CDRC, law school and volunteer neutrals, with 52% of the cases that were mediated settled.

This model of presumptive early ADR will play a key role in safely and efficiently managing the anticipated surge in cases in 2021.

The Presumptive ADR Program is supported by the Chief Judge’s Statewide ADR Advisory Committee. Implementation of the presumptive ADR initiative is overseen by the offices of the Deputy Chief Administrative Judges for Courts inside and outside New York City, the Honorable George J. Silver and the Honorable Vito Caruso, respectively. The statewide ADR Office partnered with bar groups, law schools and others to train several hundred court staff as well as prospective neutrals. These trainings included 40-hour mediation training programs for family, surrogates and commercial law practitioners, day-long evaluation programs, day-long workshops in settlement skills, and 90-minute workshops for court attorneys and bar groups. Programs included a statewide virtual Domestic Violence training for mediators on court rosters, court staff mediators who work with families, and members of the NYS Council on Divorce Mediation and Family and the Divorce Mediation Council of Greater New York. In addition, the office partnered with the Deputy Chief Administrative Judge’s ADR coordinators to deliver a series of seven hour-long recorded ADR webinars on topics such as virtual ADR, implicit bias and ADR, and managing high conflict litigants.

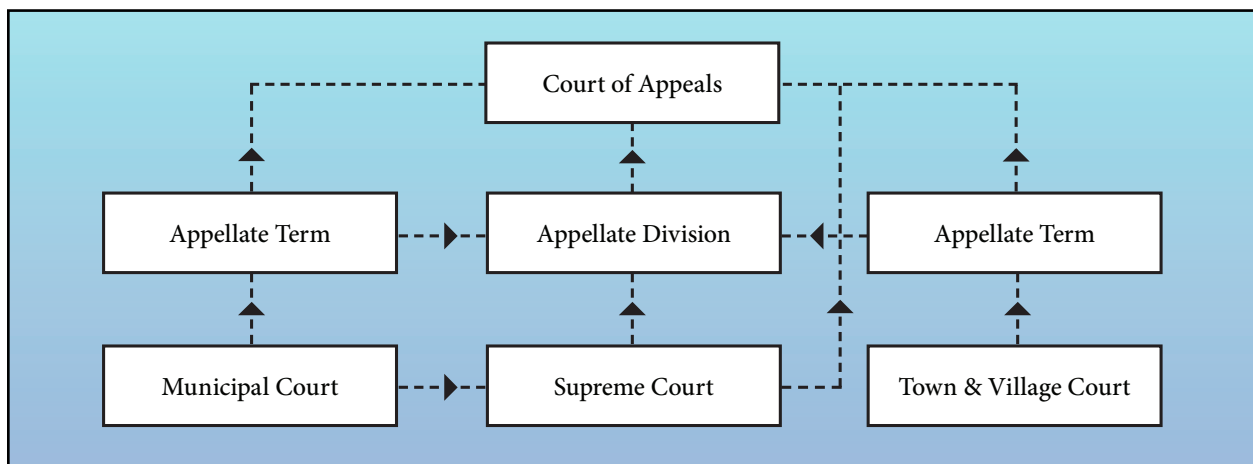
Court Simplification

“Court simplification will always be the goal until it’s done. Like everything else since the pandemic struck, we’ve been on pause with that. But I think the importance of simplifying the court system has been underscored in very real ways by the pandemic and the way in which the court system has had to pivot and adjust.”

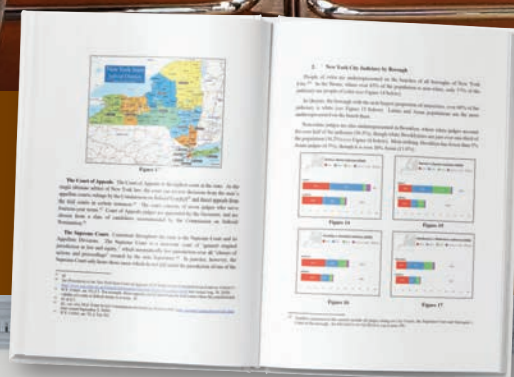
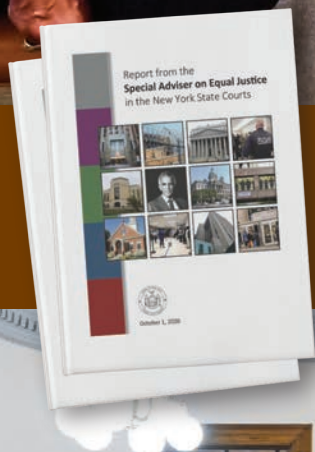
Chief Judge DiFiore

In September 2019, Chief Judge DiFiore announced a visionary proposal to streamline New York’s complex maze of trial courts and replace it with a simplified three-level structure that would result in a more efficient, effective and diverse bench at both the trial and appellate level. Her proposal would:

- Consolidate New York’s 11 different trial courts into a simple three-level structure consisting of a Supreme Court, a Municipal Court and Justice Courts.
- Merge the Court of Claims, the County Courts, the Family Courts and the Surrogate’s Courts into Supreme Court, eliminating a confusing array of courts and increasing diversity on the Supreme Court and Appellate Division.
- Establish within the merged Supreme Court six divisions—Family, Probate, Criminal, State Claims, Commercial and General—to permit specialization when necessary.
- Combine New York City’s Civil and Criminal Courts, Long Island’s District Courts, and the 61 City Courts outside New York City into a new Municipal Court.
- Preserve the pre-merger means of selection and terms of office of judges in these courts.
- Eliminate the century-old constitutional cap on the number of Supreme Court judgeships that the Legislature may create (one judge per 50,000 residents in a Judicial District).
- Empower the Legislature to change the number of Appellate Division departments once every 10 years to best meet New York’s appellate justice needs.



Although the proposal enjoys broad support, the pandemic required all three branches of government to adjust their priorities for 2020. Nevertheless, the Chief Judge remains steadfast in her goal of simplifying and modernizing the court structure. In her 2020 State of Our Judiciary message, Chief Judge DiFiore said the court system’s antiquated structure is “the single greatest barrier to our ability to deliver the kind of timely and efficient justice services the people of this State expect—and certainly deserve.”



Former Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson, left, presents his report to Chief Administrative Judge Marks.



Equal Justice in the Courts

“The death of George Floyd, and the issues it has brought into harsh focus, are a painful reminder of the repeated injustices and institutional racism that have long undermined the values and unity of our nation. The court system’s commitment to these values is especially vital. Their preservation is a cornerstone of the rule of law, the subject of sacred oaths taken by all judges and lawyers, and the daily endeavors of the thousands of court employees around the State who work tirelessly to advance the cause of justice.”

Chief Judge Janet DiFiore

Special Adviser on Equal Justice in the Courts

As the country faced the death of George Floyd, an African American man killed by a police officer in Minneapolis, and the court system faced a virulently racist Facebook posting by one of its employees, Chief Judge DiFiore ordered an independent review of the court system to help identify and eliminate any and all forms of racism, bias and disparate treatment of our colleagues and court users. The Chief Judge appointed distinguished attorney Jeh Johnson as Special Adviser on Equal Justice in the Courts, to lead this comprehensive, independent review.

Over a period of four months, Secretary Johnson—a partner at Paul, Weiss and former U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security—and his team conducted several hundred interviews with current and former New York State judges, court clerks, court officers, court attorneys and administrative personnel, plus private practitioners, public defenders, prosecutors, bar associations, judicial organizations, court employee unions and court observers. The final report, issued in October, detailed a lengthy list of recommendations, including:

- Calling on the courts’ leadership to embrace a robust “zero tolerance” discrimination policy that specifically addresses racial bias, supported by enhanced efforts to raise awareness of the courts’ discrimination policy among court employees, court users and the public.
- Developing and mandating comprehensive bias training—with a strong focus on implicit bias, racial bias and cultural sensitivity—for judges and court employees alike.
- Incorporating a segment on implicit bias in the orientation video shown to jurors; creating and implementing new rules to allow for the questioning of prospective jurors about implicit bias; and developing and adopting jury instructions that explain the concept of implicit bias and reminding jurors to be aware of their own implicit biases.

- Implementing a policy that provides clear restrictions regarding employees' use of social media—whether in an official or personal capacity—for racially or culturally offensive remarks that reflect poorly on the court system and undermine public trust in the Judiciary.
- Initiating best practices to strengthen the court system's mechanisms for making bias complaints, and raising awareness among court employees, litigants and other court users about the procedures in place to lodge a bias complaint.
- Evaluating proposed legislation, regulations and rules pertaining to the New York State Judiciary for any potential bias or disparate impact on people of color.
- Continuing to advance the courts' interpretation and translation services.
- Enhancing human resources practices to improve diversity and inclusion within the court system workforce.



Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Justice Initiatives Edwina G. Mendelson and Alphonso David, President of the Human Rights Campaign

After reviewing the report, the Chief Judge acknowledged that the court system is “falling short” in a number of areas and said “we accept and embrace our responsibility to do better—*MUCH* better.” The Chief Judge and Chief Administrative Judge appointed Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Edwina Mendelson to lead the UCS day-to-day efforts to implement the recommendations of the Special Adviser. Judge

Mendelson is working with our judicial leaders and top court managers across the state to develop detailed plans and timelines for putting Equal Justice reforms into action. The Chief Judge also appointed Alphonso David, President of the Human Rights Campaign, to serve as an outside monitor to evaluate and report on the court system's implementation of the recommendations.



Associate Judge of the Court of Appeals
Paul G. Feinman, Co-Chair of the Justice Task Force

Justice Task Force

“Institutional racism is perhaps the most significant and complex issue the Task Force has ever had to consider. The importance of tackling it head-on cannot be overstated, particularly at this critical moment in our nation’s history.”

Chief Judge DiFiore

Chief Judge DiFiore, a former co-chair of the Justice Task Force, has expanded the Task Force's original charge to examine wrongful convictions to consider other criminal justice issues such as bail and speedy trial. This year the Chief Judge directed the Justice Task Force to study and report on racial disparities in the criminal justice system. She appointed her Court of Appeals colleague, Hon. Paul J. Feinman, to lead that effort.



Hostos Community College of the City University of New York recognized Justice Llinét Rosado, Bronx Supreme Court, Civil Term and Judge Bianka Perez, Bronx Civil Court as distinguished Dominican Americans in commemoration of Dominican Heritage Month. From left: Judge Kim Wilson, Bronx Civil Court; Judge Enedina Pilar Sanchez, Bronx Housing Court; Justice Rosado; Judge Perez, Justice Wilma Guzman, Bronx Supreme Court and Justice Julio Rodriguez III, Administrative Judge, Bronx Supreme Court, Criminal Term

Office of Diversity and Inclusion

“The New York State Unified Court System embraces diversity, equity and inclusion as core values—essential to the Judiciary’s mission of delivering fair and timely justice. We are fully committed to providing an inclusive, bias-free environment as we strive to enhance access to justice for all New Yorkers, and to recruit and retain a workforce that reflects the State’s rich diversity.”

Chief Judge DiFiore

The Unified Court System has a long-standing commitment to equal employment opportunity, the elimination of under-representation of minorities and women, and a diverse workforce that reflects the community.

Diversity contributes to the many different perspectives, approaches, talents and aspirations court employees bring to their work. Diversity considerations include nationality, ethnicity, race, gender identity or expression and many other aspects of backgrounds and identities such as age, religion, geography, family status, sexual orientation, physical and mental ability and other differences. Some of our differences are unique to us as individuals; others connect us to groups of people. The strength of diversity is realized by valuing all these differences.

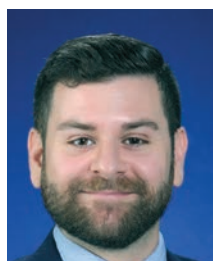
The UCS objective is to ensure an atmosphere conducive to the highest quality of work, a workplace where all people feel comfortable and, therefore, productive. The UCS is committed to a zero tolerance policy toward behavior that creates an intimidating or offensive environment. In pursuit of its mission, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (previously the Office of Workforce Diversity) in 2020:

- Expanded and revamped training to UCS personnel.
- Partnered with the National Center for State Courts Gender/ Bias/ Diversity Committees and the Consortium on Racial & Ethnic Fairness in the Courts to foster a broader perspective on issues of diversity in courts beyond New York State.
- Created and managed virtual theme-month programs highlighting diversity in the courts.



Ninth Judicial District Administrative Judge Kathie E. Davidson welcomed over 100 members of the Court community and public to a Black History Month celebration at the Westchester County Courthouse. From left: Dean Horace Anderson, Jr. of the Elizabeth Haub School of Law at Pace University; Mount Vernon Mayor Shawyn Patterson-Howard; Justice Davidson; Leroy Frazer, Jr., Esq. and Supreme Court Justice Sam D. Walker

- Produced a series of “Diversity Dialogue” podcast programs featuring nonjudicial court employees of different and diverse backgrounds. The interviews were posted on the court system’s website and distributed nationally through SoundCloud, iTunes and Stitcher.



“My goal is always to just be really helpful, keep it really professional and make things as simple as you can, especially for the pro se unrepresented litigants. I bring my perspective to that, I think, but that’s also a huge thing I take away from Judge [David H.] Guy every day. He’s very much in that vein of just trying to be really respectful and empathetic and help people get to the solution.”

Justin Harby-Conforti, Principal Court Attorney, Broome County Surrogate



“To help us better serve the public, we must possess a deeper understanding of the experiences and the culture of the community we serve. Otherwise, we will miss the mark and the important information, and our customers’ needs, will be lost.”

Yao Chen, Web Developer, Division of Technology



“The one thing that the United States holds, and I hope that this remains sacrosanct, is that we are representative of the people that we are serving. We’re doing it more and more in the courts in New York State than ever before. New York is looked to as a leader in that aspect ... I identify as a mixed-race individual of Indigenous and Latino descent—and an American, of course.”

Troy P. O’Dend’Hal, Principal Court Analyst and Statewide Human Resources Training Manager



“Don’t be angry. Do something about it.”

Court Officer Sgt. Angie Davis-Leveritte.

Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission

“We are proud that the Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission, the first permanent commission in the nation dedicated to issues of racial and ethnic fairness in the courts, is celebrating its 30th anniversary. The Commission serves as a bridge to justice for the dedicated judges and professional staff who strive to deliver equal justice under law to every person who comes through our courthouse doors, regardless of who they are or where they come from in life.”

Chief Judge DiFiore

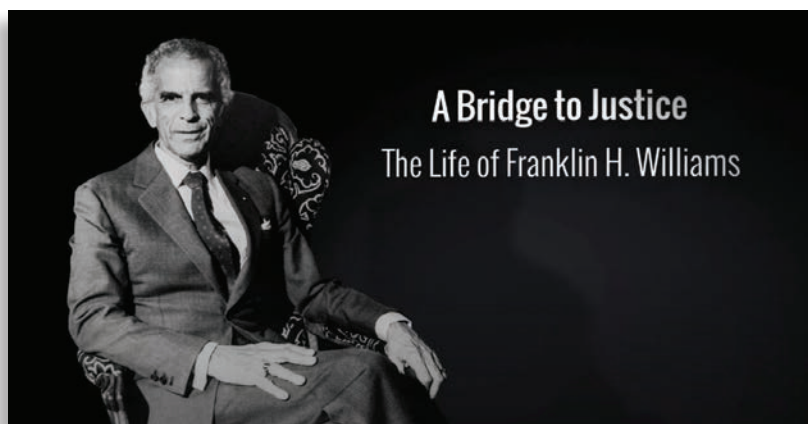
In the late 1980s, then-Chief Judge Sol Wachtler, increasingly concerned by the lack of diversity in the judicial system, asked Franklin H. Williams, a renowned civil rights attorney and former Ambassador to Ghana, to undertake an independent and comprehensive study of the court system and its treatment of minorities. The commission’s report, highly critical of the way the New York State court system treated people of color, led to permanent reforms. In 1991, commission, renamed the Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission, became the first court-based entity in the United States committed to racial and ethnic fairness in the courts. The Commission is co-chaired by Appellate Division Associate Justices Shirley Troutman (Fourth Department) and Troy K. Weber (First Department).



“There is always a need to monitor. There is always a need to examine. There’s always a need to understand the treatment of minorities, the placement of minorities within work positions.”

Hon. Richard B. Lowe III
Former Chair, Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission

In 2020, Justices Troutman and Weber assisted Secretary Jeh Johnson in his review of the New York State Courts’ policies, practices, rules and programs as they relate to issues of racial and other bias. The Commission held an implicit bias training program for judges, a program on judicial diversity and a judicial mentor program with workshops. The Commission worked with the



Office of Diversity and Inclusion on a Black History Month program, and with the Historical Society of the Courts of New York on an online program about Eunice Carter, the first African American woman Assistant District Attorney in New York State. It also worked with bar associations, strengthened its youth initiatives and met regularly with court leaders to advance its mission.

Additionally, the Commission played a pivotal role in the production of a PBS biography on Franklin H. Williams scheduled for airing during Black History Month 2021. The 30-minute film was funded in part through generous contributions from the New York State Bar Foundation and the Historical Society of the New York Courts.



Franklin H. Williams Commission Co-Chairs, Justice Troy Webber of the Appellate Division, First Department and Justice Shirley Troutman of the Appellate Division, Fourth Department share insights about their personal journeys to the bench.

The judges of the Eighth Judicial District held a moment of silence on the steps of Old County Hall, Buffalo in honor of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who died in September 2020.



NYS Judicial Committee on Women in the Courts

“Though we have clearly come a long way in reducing gender bias in the courts... substantial inequities continue to exist regarding the treatment of women litigants, witnesses and attorneys—including inappropriate or offensive conduct directed toward women by far too many members of the legal profession.”

Chief Judge DiFiore

In 1986, the New York State Task Force on Women in the Courts issued a report concluding that gender bias was a pervasive problem in the courts and that women were frequently denied equal justice, equal treatment and equal opportunity. In 2019, the Judicial Committee on Women in the Courts revisited the issue, surveying over 5,000 New York attorneys on the treatment of women attorneys and litigants in the courts. In a report issued in 2020, the Committee found that, while the treatment of women has improved markedly over the past 34 years, significant areas of bias remain.

The Committee, chaired by Judge Betty Weinberg Ellerin (Alston & Bird LLP), issued a series of recommendations to address gender bias in the court system. Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Edwina Mendelson is charged with leading implementation of these recommendations.



“The information derived from the Committee’s survey, along with its extensive body of research on court-related gender issues, will help guide us as we continue to challenge the use of gender stereotypes, working to ensure that all who enter our courthouses are treated with dignity, civility and respect, regardless of gender, gender expression, sexual orientation or any other distinguishing characteristics.”

Chief Administrative Lawrence K. Marks

Gender Fairness Committees

As part of the court system’s continuing commitment to gender equity, 24 local gender bias and gender fairness committees around the state address gender fairness issues, conducting public awareness and continuing legal education programs on workplace issues, health and well-being and community outreach. Programs included:

- “Sexual Harassment Issues and the Courts”
- “Domestic Violence Trends in the Age of COVID-19 and Bail Reform”
- “Girls and Girls of Color in the Criminal Justice System”
- “Combating Cyber Sexual Abuse”
- “The Vicious Cycle: The Neurobiology of Trauma”
- “Human Trafficking, An Upstate Perspective”
- “Language Access and Domestic Violence”

Richard C. Failla LGBTQ Commission

Bearing the name of a jurist who pioneered advocacy for LGBTQ rights throughout his career, the Richard C. Failla LGBTQ Commission is dedicated to promoting equal participation and access throughout the court system by all persons regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. In furtherance of that mission, the Commission in 2020:

- Led efforts to educate the judiciary and the public about the provisions of the Child-Parent Security Act before the statute took effect in 2021.
- Produced a virtual LGBTQ Pride Month program in conjunction with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, the Office of the Inspector General and the Pride Alliance of the New York Courts. The program came only days after the U.S. Supreme Court issued *Bostock v. Clayton County, Georgia*, holding that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 covers discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Drafted and published a joint statement with the Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission expressing commitment to a common set of principles toward the “fight for a more equitable court system worthy of our highest ideals.”
- Organized and unveiled a virtual conference focusing on LGBTQ family law in New York and marking the 25th anniversary of the *Matter of Jacob* decision.
- Played key roles in virtual programs for Touro Law Center and Albany Law School exploring, respectively, the *Bostock* decision and the needs of the HIV-positive community.
- Worked with transgender advocates throughout the year to restore access to and streamline procedures for obtaining name changes.



The Failla Commission organized a virtual conference to mark the 25th anniversary of *Matter of Jacob*, where the Court of Appeals held that the same-sex partner of a legal parent may adopt that parent's child.

Managing Inspector General for Bias Matters

The Inspector General's Office is responsible for the investigation and elimination of infractions of disciplinary standards, criminal activities, conflicts of interest, misconduct, misfeasance and incompetence on the part of nonjudicial employees of the UCS, and persons or corporations doing business with the UCS, with respect to their dealings with the courts. A specialized unit within the office of the Inspector General—the Office of the Managing Inspector General for Bias Matters—investigates allegations of bias based upon race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, domestic violence status, prior criminal record, age, marital status, disability, national origin or religion that affect the workplace or the terms and conditions of employment of UCS personnel.



Dave Whalen, an attorney in the Office of Justice Court Support, plays the Star Spangled Banner for 12,000 fans at an Albany sporting event.

Americans with Disabilities Act

“It’s incredibly special to have the public trust and be able to be employed and work on behalf of the public and try to make sure that they are treated fairly and justly”

Dave Whalen

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law prohibiting discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities. As defined by the statute, a person with a disability is one who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity.

The New York State Unified Court System is committed to fully complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act by providing services, programs and activities in a way that assures equal and full accessibility for all court users. Each courthouse in the State has a designated liaison who is charged with the responsibility of assisting litigants, jurors, attorneys and other court users in obtaining the accommodations needed to ensure that they can meaningfully participate in the justice system.

In 2020, at the recommendation of the Chief Judge’s Advisory Committee on Access for People with Disabilities, the UCS developed and implemented a revised procedure for receiving and processing requests for reasonable accommodations, enabling a more responsive, efficient and streamlined process for providing judicial and administrative accommodations. In addition, the Committee recommended, and the court system approved, a pilot program for online disability accommodation requests.

In June, the nation and the court system celebrated the 30th anniversary of the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act. One of the individuals who has benefited from that legislation is Dave Whalen, an attorney in the Office of Justice Court Support. In an Amici podcast interview, Mr. Whalen discussed the opportunities available in the courts to people with disabilities. Above, using a device he helped invent, he plays the Star-Spangled Banner for 12,000 fans at an Albany sporting event.



Judge Anthony Cannataro, Administrative Judge, New York City Civil Court, testifying at the annual Chief Judge's Hearing on Civil Legal Services.

Access to Justice

“Access to justice fosters public trust and confidence in our legal system and in the rule of law, which serve as building blocks for private investment, economic growth and prosperity for all of us.”

Chief Judge Janet DiFiore

Fairness and access in New York’s court system are goals that inform all areas of the work of the courts. This year, as the COVID-19 pandemic had a disproportionate impact on low-income New Yorkers and communities of color, the challenge of securing legal representation for those facing civil legal issues grew urgently. Many low to moderate income families experienced a devastating loss of income as sectors of the economy contracted. These personal and economic losses increased and intensified legal problems in eviction, domestic violence, unemployment, consumer debt and other areas that disproportionately affect low income families and communities of color.

The court system’s move to virtual courts provided both an opportunity and a challenge. Encouraging reports emerged of the benefits of remote technology in connecting low income litigants to court resources and legal service providers. At the same time, the reality and extent of the digital divide made clear that many of the court users who needed these resources the most were unable to access them because they lacked computer equipment, high speed WIFI, smartphones, or adequate data plans.

In response to the obvious need for assistance for unrepresented court users, Chief Judge DiFiore and Chief Administrative Judge Marks appointed Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Justice Initiatives Edwina G. Mendelson to lead an internal working group to develop strategies for promoting access to our virtual courts for unrepresented court users. In May, Judge Mendelson issued a preliminary report highlighting several efforts that jurisdictions across the state have taken to provide access to virtual courts by establishing locations where court users can access legal advice, file legal papers, and participate in virtual court proceedings. These efforts include the 9th Judicial District’s Faith Based Remote Access Centers in houses of worship and kiosks set up in courthouses across the state. In a partnership with the Center for Court Innovation, remote court access facilities will be introduced in community courts in New York City.



Chief Judge's Hearing on Civil Legal Services at Court of Appeals Hall.

Front from left: Chief Administrative Judge Marks, Chief Judge DiFiore, Scott M. Karson, President of the New York State Bar Association; back from left: Presiding Justice Elizabeth Garry, Appellate Division, Third Department; Presiding Justice Rolando Acosta, Appellate Division, First Department; Presiding Justice Alan Scheinkman, Appellate Division, Second Department and Presiding Justice Gerald Whalen, Appellate Division, Fourth Department

Access to Counsel

Access to counsel became an especially urgent concern in the COVID-19 pandemic, as New Yorkers experienced economic hardship, disruption and, sadly, deaths of family and friends. Communities of color were disproportionately affected not only by COVID-19, but by legal issues such as child custody and visitation, domestic violence, eviction and consumer debt. The response by members of the New York bar was gratifying. The efforts included the New York State Bar Association's COVID-19 Pro Bono Recovery Task Force, which recruited over 1000 lawyers to assist with pandemic-related legal matters, and the Bar Association's leadership of a volunteer effort on the part of hundreds of lawyers to work with our Surrogate's Courts to provide free legal assistance to families who lost loved ones to COVID-19. These and many other programs provided extensive, important pro bono assistance to New Yorkers in a year of extraordinary need.

Judiciary Civil Legal Services

With the support of the Governor and the Legislature, the Judiciary Civil Legal Services (JCLS) program provided funding to 78 civil legal services organizations serving low income New Yorkers in every county of the State in matters involving the essentials of life: housing (including evictions, foreclosures and homelessness); family matters (including domestic violence, children and family stability); access to health care and education; and subsistence income (including wages, disability, veterans and other benefits). In 2020, JCLS providers reported handling 421,604 cases benefiting more than 2 million New Yorkers. The JCLS allocated \$100 million in FY2020-21, including \$85 million for the funding of JCLS civil legal service providers and \$15 million to support civil legal service providers who receive funding through the Interest on New York State Interest on Lawyer Account Fund (IOLA). In 2020, the \$85 million allocation was reduced by 10% when the New York State budget crisis necessitated a reduction of budgets.

Permanent Commission on Access to Justice

The Permanent Commission on Access to Justice, Chaired by Helaine Barnett, is charged with studying and developing recommendations to improve access to civil legal services for low-income New Yorkers. The Commission supports the Chief Judge's annual statewide hearing to assess the unmet needs for civil legal representation in matters involving fundamental human needs. The Commission is committed to ensuring meaningful access to justice for all New Yorkers, collaborating on access to justice issues and expanding pro bono services and help for unrepresented litigants. This work took on special importance in this year of reduced funding for civil legal services.

Business Council for Access to Justice

The Business Council for Access to Justice was established by Chief Judge DiFiore in 2020 to provide strategic advice and support on critical initiatives, from educating the business sector on the importance of policies supporting equal access to justice, to fostering pro bono service by corporate counsel, to partnering with legal service providers on specific projects designed to close the access-to-justice gap in low-income communities. The work of the Business Council serves to complement the efforts of the Permanent Commission on Access to Justice.

Led by Commission member Kimberley D. Harris, Executive Vice President and General Counsel of NBCUniversal, and Eric F. Grossman, Managing Director and Chief Legal Officer of Morgan Stanley, the Business Council is a diverse group of experienced business leaders.



Language Access

With over five million people speaking languages other than English in their homes, New York State's diverse population requires a robust language interpreting program to serve court users. The UCS has 287 interpreters on staff and provides free interpreting services in over 200 languages. In 2020, interpreters were provided in over 32,000 court appearances in 109 languages; over 21,000 of these appearances were during the pandemic in virtual courts. When a qualified interpreter is not available in person, the court system provides a remote interpreter.

The Office of Language Access completed translations of order of protection forms into Bengali, Burmese, French, Haitian Creole, Karen, Korean, Polish and Somali. In response to the pandemic, the Office reviewed translations of COVID notices and other materials for the UCS website to ensure their accuracy. The Office is also working with the colleges and universities that are part of our Court Interpreter Internship Program to develop an internship that can be completed online.



Henry M. Greenberg, Chair, Commission to Reimagine the Future of New York's Courts

Commission to Reimagine the Future of New York's Courts

“While a tragedy, the COVID-19 crisis has been an impetus for innovation, leading us to examine what we have learned from the pandemic and how to best move forward. The pandemic’s dramatic impact on court operations has paved the way for the embrace of new technologies and approaches, with a focus on fairness, efficiency and efficacy.”

Chief Judge Janet DiFiore

In June, Chief Judge DiFiore created a new commission charged with examining the enhanced use of technology and online platforms, among other innovations, and making recommendations to improve the delivery and quality of justice services, facilitate access to justice and better equip the New York State court system to keep pace with society’s rapidly evolving changes. She directed the Commission to Reimagine the Future of New York’s Courts—chaired by former New York State Bar Association President Henry M. Greenberg of Greenberg Traurig—to explore regulatory, structural, technological and other innovations to provide short-term recommendations as the courts resume in-person operations, and a long-term blueprint for the court system of tomorrow.

The Commission, organized into six working groups, issued its first report on restarting in-person trials and grand jury proceedings in courthouses, prioritizing public health and safety. In its second report, the Commission recommended evaluating the practical, constitutional, budgetary and technical factors of virtual proceedings as they remain part of the future of New York’s court system; redesigning and standardizing the UCS website across courts; and proposing legislation to allow the Chief Administrative Judge to institute e-filing at all state trial courts. The Commission’s third report’s recommendations included creation of a single appellate case management system for the Appellate Division and the Court of Appeals. The Commission’s final report of 2020 recommended the development of a program to permit trained social workers to offer limited legal services to their social work clients, and the expansion of the court system’s successful Court Navigators Program to assist unrepresented clients in high volume courts.

Criminal Justice Reform

“Cash bail has proven to be inherently discriminatory for people of limited means, and it has been revealed that black, brown and poor people have been disproportionately harmed by a bail system that routinely kept them in jail simply because they could not afford to pay their way out ... As the public discourse on bail unfolds and our leaders and stakeholders come together to examine the impact of our efforts, I am confident that any identified unintended consequences of this sea change in criminal justice can, and will be, addressed.”

Chief Judge Janet DiFiore

At the start of 2020, newly enacted criminal justice reforms came into effect that sharply reduced the categories of cases in which bail could be imposed, and instituted new, shorter time deadlines for discovery in criminal cases. Before their full effect could be seen, the pandemic began and the resulting suspension and tolling of statutes of limitation and filing periods delayed full implementation of the discovery measures. Later in 2020, the legislature modified the bail reform legislation, adding more qualifying offenses in which judges can impose monetary bail. The impact of these important pieces of legislation will be better understood when operations in the court system return to normal.

Raise-the-Age (RTA)

In December, the court system received the final report of the Governor’s “Raise the Age Implementation Task Force,” on which Deputy Chief Administrative Judges Edwina Mendelson and Vito Caruso, and former Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Michael Coccoma served as members.

The Task Force’s final report found that the landmark legislation enacted in 2017 to raise the age of criminal responsibility in New York from 16 to 18 is achieving the intended purpose of diverting young people out of the adult criminal justice system and into our Family Courts, where there has been a significant expansion in rehabilitative options and services. The Task Force found that as of June 2020, no young

people under the age of 18 were detained with adults or sentenced to local jails or state prisons and that confinement of young people, when necessary, is now taking place in specialized, youth-appropriate facilities. The Task Force’s report also made clear the key role that the court system played in the smooth implementation of “Raise the Age.”

Over the past three years, great strides have been made in improving the youth justice system, maintaining more youth in the community and expanding age-appropriate services and interventions to better meet the needs of youth. The Final Report of the Raise the Age Implementation Task Force outlined some of the key findings and legislative changes as follows:

Sentencing

The number of 16 and 17-year-olds sentenced to either a state prison or local adult jail in 2016 was almost 3,000. In 2020, the number of youths in those settings has dropped to zero.

Youth Part Case Processing

In Youth Parts in NYC, approximately 79% of youth were released at arraignment; in Youth Parts outside New York City, approximately 63% were released. The RTA Youth Parts also removed 82% of the cases to juvenile probation intake and Family Court where there are opportunities for diversion.

Delinquency Case Processing

During the first 18 months of RTA, 1,908 petitions filed against 16 and 17-year-olds were disposed of in Family Court.

Racial and Ethnic Disparity

Black youth comprise a substantially larger proportion of arrests and probation intakes than their proportion of the general population. The State's confinement facilities are also predominantly filled with youth of color. In consultation with stakeholders, several strategies are under consideration to address these disproportionate numbers, including providing opportunities for specific intervention and alternatives to detention or placement.

In a related issue, research shows the brain does not finish fully maturing until the mid-20s. These emerging adults are incarcerated at double their representation in the adult populace. With the support from the Office for Justice Initiatives and the Columbia Justice Lab, new pilot courts in Manhattan and New Rochelle are specifically designed to address the 18 to 25 year old Emerging Adult population.



The Final Report of the Raise the Age Implementation Task Force

Restorative Justice

“The Community Dispute Resolution Centers Program represents the Unified Court System’s commitment to provide citizens with opportunities to develop their own solutions to the issues that might otherwise bring them to court.”

Chief Administrative Judge Marks

A partnership including two branches of government and four separate agencies—the Office of Court Administration, the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, the New York City Department of Probation and the non-profit Community Dispute Resolution Centers—is taking a different approach with a new and novel program: the Community Resolve Initiative.

With an emphasis on accountability and healing, the Community Resolve Initiative helps young people gain a greater understanding of the harm they have caused, make amends to the victims and the community, heal relationships and prevent recidivism. Interventions include restorative conferences, victim meetings, impact statement from victims and other affected parties, and connection to other services.

Family and Society

“Every time a child dies from maltreatment, the public’s faith in the ability of our courts to do our work is deeply shaken. It is up to us to lead the way in ensuring that children are protected from preventable harm.”

Chief Judge Janet DiFiore

Child Fatality Advisory Council

In early 2020, the Chief Judge announced the creation of a statewide Child Fatality Advisory Council to develop protocols and best practices to better ensure the safety of vulnerable children involved in the family justice system. Led by Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Edwina Mendelson—a former New York City Family Court Administrative Judge—and made up of judges, lawyers, child welfare and medical professionals, the Council is devising guidelines for conducting comprehensive reviews of child fatalities. The Council’s goal is to identify and correct deficiencies in the family justice system, strengthen the courts and child welfare systems, and prevent future fatalities.

Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children

The New York State Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children was established in 1988 to improve the lives and life chances of children involved with the New York courts. The Commission is chaired by the Hon. Karen K. Peters, former Presiding Justice of the Appellate Division, Third Department, and comprised of judges, lawyers, advocates, physicians, legislators, and state and local officials.

At its inception, the Commission primarily concentrated its efforts on the youngest children before the courts—securing early intervention, establishing a statewide system of Children’s Centers in the Courts, improving

court proceedings, promoting the healthy development of children in foster care and focusing on the needs of infants involved in child welfare proceedings. Over the past 32 years, the Commission’s role has expanded to include implementing the New York State Court Improvement Project (CIP), a federally funded project to assess and improve foster care, termination of parental rights and adoption proceedings.

The challenge of the pandemic required that the court system move to a virtual court model that required judges, attorneys and litigants to utilize technology platforms that were in many cases unfamiliar. The Commission saw an immediate need and reached out to our partners and the Redlich Horwitz Foundation. Redlich Horwitz assisted the Commission with a generous grant to support family-centered practices, including the provision of remote training to attorneys-for-children, parents and child welfare agencies on how best to use technology platforms to communicate with their clients and participate in hearings.

The Commission, in collaboration with the Office for Justice Initiatives and the Child Welfare Court Improvement Program, produced a series of free programming to assist parents, attorneys, youth and child welfare organizations navigate the landscape of remote court proceedings in Family Court.

The first in the series of programs addressing topics particular to the virtual Family Court setting, *Participating in a Virtual Court Appearance Via Skype for Business*, answered basic questions about taking part in a court proceeding using Skype for Business.

In the second program, *Family Court Representation in the Virtual Age*, Albany County Family Court Judge Richard Rivera and Jaya L. Connors, Assistant Professor of Law and Director of Family Violence Litigation Clinic at Albany Law School, discussed virtual representation in the Family Court.

The third program in the series, *Family Court in the Virtual Age*, was a live virtual roundtable discussion, of the Family Court's response to the pandemic and the implications of virtual representation. It featured: Hon. Edwina Mendelson, Deputy Chief Administrative Judge, Office for Justice Initiatives; Hon. Craig J. Doran, Administrative Judge, Seventh Judicial District; Hon. Jeanette Ruiz, Administrative Judge, New York City Family Court; and Henry M. Greenberg, chairman of the Chief Judge's Commission to Reimagine the Future of New York's Courts.

Children's Centers

Because hundreds of young children ordinarily accompany caregivers to scheduled court appearances, where they may be exposed to disturbing proceedings and their presence can be a distraction from judicial business, the UCS developed the nation's first statewide system of Children's Centers in the courts. The Centers provide a safe, welcoming, literacy-rich environment and a means of connecting children and families with vital health, educational and nutritional services. In the COVID-19 pandemic, it became necessary to close the Children's Centers until such time as the courts can reopen them safely.

Child Welfare Court Improvement Project

The Child Welfare Court Improvement Project (CWCIP) is a federally funded initiative that supports the Family Court's mandate to promote the safety, permanence and well-being of abused and neglected children.

In recognition of the integral role courts play in charting the course for children who are the subject of abuse, neglect, foster care, termination of parental rights and adoption proceedings, the project provides resources and technical assistance to promote continuous quality improvement at the intersection of the legal/judicial and child welfare systems.

The Office of Justice Initiatives is leading the statewide expansion of CWCIP to be more firmly rooted into the structure of the court system and integrated into the Chief Judge's Excellence Initiative.


Child Welfare Permanency Mediation

Permanency mediation is a consensual dispute resolution process for Family Court Article 10 cases in which a specially trained mediator helps parties to identify issues, clarify perceptions and explore options for a mutually acceptable outcome. Child permanency mediation program roster mediators are experienced mediators trained in advanced family mediation techniques, child welfare laws and regulations, domestic violence issues, large group facilitation techniques, trauma-informed care and cultural humility/implicit bias.

The Child Welfare Permanency Mediation program is offered through the CWIP. Currently there are approved programs in New York City and in the 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th Judicial Districts.



Judge Eric Galarneau, Cohoes City Court, presides at graduation of the U-CAN court-based mentoring program, which continued operating in Cohoes City Court and Schenectady County Family Court, despite the pandemic.


Certificate of Achievement
IS HEREBY PRESENTED TO

Problem-Solving Courts

New York State has long been a national leader in the development of specialized courts (often called “problem-solving” courts) that focus on treatment and accountability for criminal justice-involved individuals. The court system currently has more than 300 of these courts statewide.

Opioid Courts

In 2020, three new opioid courts opened in Montgomery, Oneida and Queens Counties. There is now an opioid court in every NYC borough and at least one opioid court in each of the 13 judicial districts.

Family Treatment Courts

A grant of \$1.75 million from the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention will help the court system bring Family Treatment Court best practices to a wider audience, especially rural counties, for three years beginning in October 2020.

Human Trafficking Courts

There are currently 12 Human Trafficking Intervention Courts statewide, with plans to open another in the Capital Region when court operations normalize.

Domestic Violence and Integrated Domestic Violence Courts

The court system operates 41 Domestic Violence Courts and 42 Integrated Domestic Violence Courts. Due to COVID, the court system worked fervently in 2020 to increase the availability of remote sites for the filing of family offense petitions and sponsored numerous webinars on the logistics of remote filings.

Mental Health Courts

The court system operates 30 Mental Health Courts, with five more in the planning stage. In 2020, more than 140 participants benefited from the specialized services and treatment opportunities in these courts.

Drug Treatment Courts

The Office of Policy and Planning (OPP) is implementing New York’s Strategic Plan for Adult Drug Treatment Courts, which includes the BeST self-assessment, used to assist drug court teams in employing best practices.

Additionally, OPP has spearheaded a review of structural and racial inequities in treatment courts, with technical assistance from the Bureau of Justice Assistance and American University to implement a Racial and Ethnic Disparities self-assessment tool for adult drug courts. In October, OPP received a Department of Justice grant to establish a statewide Adult Drug Court Training and Transition Project, which will provide comprehensive, online-focused trainings, including a mentor program training, motivational interviewing training, and a collaboration with the New York Association of Treatment Court Providers to convene an annual conference and monthly training webinars for the next four years.

Veterans’ Treatment Courts

There are currently 37 Veterans’ Treatment Courts in New York State. In 2020, OPP worked to fortify the veteran mentor initiative, a cornerstone of the program from the outset. A Veteran Mentor Handbook was created, and a virtual mentor training series was conducted.

Elder Abuse

An Elder Justice Bench guide was funded through the Office of Violence Against Women and created collaboratively by the Office of Policy and Planning, the Center for Court Innovation and the New York State Judicial Committee on Elder Justice. The guide provides tools for identifying elder abuse and relevant statutes while offering practical suggestions and a compendium of community resources.

Specialty Courts

Commercial Division

The Commercial Division of New York State Supreme Court is an efficient, sophisticated, cutting edge court, dealing with challenging commercial cases. Its primary goal is the cost-effective, predictable and fair adjudication of complex commercial cases.

Since its inception, the Commercial Division has implemented rules, procedures and forms especially designed to address the unique challenges of commercial practice. Through the work of the Commercial Division Advisory Council—a committee of commercial practitioners, corporate in-house counsel and jurists devoted to the Division’s excellence—the Commercial Division has functioned as an incubator, becoming a recognized leader in court system innovation, and demonstrating an unparalleled creativity and flexibility in development of rules and practices.

In 2018, the Administrative Board of the Courts requested public comment on the advisability of adopting selected Commercial Division Rules into general civil practice. After review of public comments, including those received from the Advisory Committee on Civil Practice and the Advisory Committee on Matrimonial Practice, and after input from a working group of judges and attorneys, the Administrative Board approved adoption of certain Commercial Division Rules to other courts of civil jurisdiction.

On December 29, 2020, Chief Administrative Judge Marks issued Administrative Order 270/2020. The Order incorporates 29 rules, and variations thereof, of the Commercial Division into the Uniform Rules for the Supreme Court and the County Court, effective February 1, 2021.

Indian Nation Courts

The New York State Courts promote judicial collaboration with the indigenous population and has emerged as a national leader in improving the administration of justice for tribal nations within its borders. The UCS has joined with the federal courts within New York State and the justice systems of New York’s nine Indian tribal nations to establish the New York Federal-State-Tribal Courts and Indian Nations Justice Forum. The forum explores ways in which the different court systems can collaborate, nurture mutual understanding and foster mutual respect. Judges, court personnel, child welfare workers and tribal nation officials address problems of mutual concern, promote efficiency, encourage child support enforcement and common law enforcement goals.

Indian Nations	NY Counties
Cayuga Nation	Cayuga Seneca
Oneida Indian Nation	Madison
Onondaga Nation	Onondaga
Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe	Franklin St. Lawrence
Seneca Nation of Indians Allegany Reservation	Cattaraugus
Seneca Nation of Indians Cattaraugus Reservation	Cattaraugus Chautauqua Erie
Seneca Nation of Indians Oil Springs Reservation	Allegany Cattaraugus
Shinnecock Indian Nation	Suffolk
Tonawanda Band of Seneca Indians	Erie Genesee
Tuscarora Nation	Niagara
Unkechaug Indian Nation	Suffolk



Town And Village Courts

In the 57 counties outside of New York City, 1,776 Town and Village Justices preside in 1,197 Town and Village courts, supported by approximately 1,800 town and village court clerks. The Office of Justice Court Support (OJCS) provides legal, educational, administrative and operational support to the courts, fielding more than 20,000 inquiries annually.

Throughout the pandemic, the Office of Justice Court Support worked closely with stakeholder partners, such as the Office of the State Comptroller and the Department of Motor Vehicles, to modify or suspend certain administrative and operational practices to reduce in-person foot traffic within the town and village courts and thereby reduce the risk of spreading the coronavirus in communities statewide, while at the same time allowing courts to comply with their statutory obligations. The Office introduced innovative virtual training formats, recording podcast-style video classes to engage judges and clerks as laws and operating protocols pivoted throughout the crisis.

With assistance from the Division of Technology, which modified and expanded upon existing automated notification systems, the town and village courts began notifying litigants via text message when their cases were ready to be heard. This technology enabled litigants to safely wait outside the courthouse while courtroom capacity remained within reduced limits. The courts also began conducting a variety of proceedings virtually, including arraignments, status conferences and other matters.

One of the important roles of the Office of Justice Court Support is administering the Justice Court Assistance Program. In 2020, the program helped municipalities cover the costs of acquiring personal protective equipment and adapting courtrooms to comply with social distancing protocols. In the early summer months of 2020, OJCS implemented an expedited reimbursement process for these costs and distributed funds to towns and villages to help keep litigants, attorneys, court clerks and justices safe.

Training

The UCS is committed to providing the court system with the tools its needs to achieve the efficiency expected through the Excellence Initiative.

New York State Judicial Institute

The Judicial Institute (JI) provides statewide education and training for the judges and justices of the court system. The JI provides a forum for judicial scholarship that includes continuing education seminars and conferences, as well as cooperative education programs with other state and federal judicial systems and related endeavors.

The pandemic rendered on-site training impossible for most of the year, so the JI turned to virtual training. Since the March 2020 “pause” restricted operations to remote activities, the JI recorded and posted over 200 Continuing Judicial Education/ Continuing Legal Education programs on its website, some in real time. These included COVID-related programs, such as practical skills for conducting virtual civil trials, hearings and conferences; remote signing of court orders and decisions; using NYSCEF (New York State Court E-Filing); and conducting virtual criminal hearings. Programming also addressed the effect of the stays and suspensions of laws by Executive Orders, and wellness for judges. Virtual Judicial Seminars offered such timely programs as Police Uses of Force, Police Misconduct Cases, and Chokeholds and Judicial Responses.

A number of new initiatives were undertaken in 2020. First, the JI created programming for over 50 summer interns, including Introduction to the Appellate Process, by Hon. Alan Scheinkman, Presiding Justice of the Appellate Division, Second Department, and Tips on Researching and Drafting Decisions and Bench Memos, by Hon. Saliann Scarpulla, Associate Justice, Appellate Division, First Department.

The JI created a video series, “Meet Your PJ,” in which all four Appellate Division Presiding Justices discussed their individual departments and their own jurisprudential approach, and offered inside advice on what counsel should do—and not do—at oral argument. The interviews with Justice Rolanda T. Acosta, First Department, Justice Alan D. Scheinkman, Second Department, Justice Elizabeth A. Garry, Third Department, and Justice Gerald J. Whalen, Fourth Department, are all posted on the court system’s YouTube channel (NYS Courts). Additionally, each interview was converted to a podcast interview, and the audio and a transcript are available on the court system’s Amici podcast page.

“The key is preparation. The key to success in all things is preparation. Knowing the facts and the record is really the heart of it because we might ask questions that are not what you were fully anticipating.”

Hon. Elizabeth A. Garry
Presiding Justice, Appellate Division, Third Department

“When the judge is asking a question, listen to the question and answer the question...Don’t just start talking about some other point in your brief that you think is important because you will lose points with the whole panel if you’re not responding to questions.”

Hon. Gerald J. Whalen
Presiding Justice, Appellate Division, Fourth Department

Additionally, the JI produced a five-part series on women leaders in the courts, featuring insightful interviews with: Chief Judge DiFiore; Eileen D. Millet, OCA counsel; Nancy J. Barry, Chief of Operations; Maureen McAlary, Director of the Division of Financial Management; and Christine Sisario, Director of Technology. All the videos are on the YouTube channel; audio and transcripts are on the Amici podcast page.



On January 6, 2020, 103 newly appointed or elected judges in New York State began an intensive five-day seminar at the Judicial Institute in White Plains designed to help them transition into their new role.

“I think there’s a way to be a good manager and a bad manager. Sometimes they say women are soft. I think women can multitask quite well and can see the whole picture.”

Nancy J. Barry, Chief of Operations

“Listening and learning are the most important things for managers.”

Eileen D. Millett, Counsel, Office of Court Administration

At the end of 2020, the Hon. Juanita Bing Newton, who served as Dean of the Judicial Institute beginning in 2009, retired after a lengthy career as a judge and judicial administrator. A farewell interview with Judge Bing Newton is available on the court system’s YouTube channel and the audio is available as an Amici podcast.

“Judge Bing Newton has earned our gratitude and our appreciation for being a shining example of leadership, for her strong voice in support of equity and fairness in the courts and in the criminal justice system, and for her warm friendship and wise counsel to so many of us over many, many years. I know that I have certainly been the lucky beneficiary of her friendship and her honest counsel, and I will always be grateful for her generosity.”

Chief Judge DiFiore

Judicial Campaign Ethics Center

The Judicial Campaign Ethics Center (JCEC) serves as a central resource on campaign ethics for judicial candidates each year. In 2020, the JCEC provided campaign ethics training to 157 judicial candidates and received approximately 655 ethics inquiries from judicial candidates. Many of the inquiries were from judicial candidates seeking guidance on campaign ethics rules pertaining to door-to-door petitioning and attending fundraising events, given the state’s guidelines on social distancing due to the coronavirus pandemic. In September 2020, the Advisory Committee on Judicial Ethics issued Opinion 20-111, which authorizes judicial candidates to attend virtual political fundraising events during their window period, subject to the usual limitations on price and number of tickets, provided they attend and appear on screen along with other attendees.



Safety and Security



Chief of Public Safety
Michael Magliano

The Department of Public Safety (DPS) is responsible for developing uniform guidelines, policies and procedures for ensuring safety throughout the UCS. With the paramount goal of protecting judges, court staff and the public, DPS is responsible for emergency preparedness planning and procedures for each court location. The Chief of Public Safety also oversees the management of judicial threats, reviews and assists in the development of security planning for new and existing facilities, and is responsible for developing standards and curricula for the Court Officers Academy and for the Court Officers Rules and Procedures Manual. The UCS employs approximately 4,100 highly trained uniformed court officers who are peace officers under New York law, making it one of the largest law enforcement agencies in the nation.

In 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, DPS assumed new roles, including responsibility for acquiring and distributing PPE to all UCS facilities throughout the state. In addition, DPS prepares a daily report of all known positive COVID-19 tests of UCS employees and court users for the Chief Judge and the Chief Administrative Judge, and provides this information to the Office of Public Information for anonymized public notice of these positive cases.

The court system is committed to recruiting a diverse workforce throughout the state. Potential court officers must be at least 20 ½ years of age, a United States citizen and a resident of New York State. They must be a high school graduate or the equivalent, have a valid NYS driver's license and be eligible to purchase and carry firearms.



Students from the State University of New York at Albany toured the New York State Court Officers Academy in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. The tour was coordinated by the court system's Office of Diversity and Inclusion following a job fair at the university.



A litigant uses a kiosk to appear virtually in Housing Court at the Bronx County Courthouse.

Access to Information

The Court System is dedicated to facilitating access by the public to court and administrative records in full conformity with State law, and utilizes several different strategies to keep the public informed about court activities and information:

- **The New York Courts Emergency Alert Portal Account** provides the public with timely information on court closings and delays via text message, email or a telephone call. It was launched in September 2019 and currently has more than 18,000 subscribers.
- The court system uses social media such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube to keep the public up-to-date on court system news, closings and delays, important decisions and calendars.
- **The Public Information Office** exists to provide information about the court system to the media and those who work within the court system.
- **The Office of Public Affairs** works to promote awareness of the work of the New York State Judiciary among the public, the legal community and court employees.

800-Court-NY

As the court system's public information line, 800-Court-NY responds to an average of 100,000 calls each year. From updating the status of weather-related closures of court facilities and other emergency plans, to aiding callers with specific questions, 800-Court-NY typically assists hundreds of callers each day, using a virtual call center and specially trained staff from locations throughout the state. For callers who do not speak English, interpreter assistance is also available. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related shutdowns, 800-Court-NY was offline from mid-March through June 2020. During this time, a separate "Coronavirus Hotline" was set up to answer questions and direct callers to emergency resources, primarily for the newly created virtual court operations. During that critical period, the Coronavirus Hotline answered nearly 20,000 calls.

By July, 800-Court-NY resumed operation with enhanced capacity. For the second half of this year, 800-Court-NY has connected with more than 50,000 callers, with monthly averages that are 15-20% higher than pre-pandemic; the Coronavirus Hotline continues to run as well.

eTrack

Our free case information service provides information on future appearance dates for cases in Criminal and Family Courts. Individuals may also view information on both active and disposed cases in Civil Supreme and local Civil Courts, and by signing up for our eTrack case tracking service, individuals can receive email updates and appearance reminders for Civil Supreme and local civil court cases.



Computer setup for New York City Housing Court Kiosk

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 \$3.3 billion were approved by the Legislature for the State Judiciary for the 2020-2021 fiscal year. Due to the ongoing fiscal crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Executive Branch called for all State agencies, including the Judiciary, to reduce operational spending by 10% (\$291 million for the Judiciary). The UCS instituted a spending reduction plan that included imposing a strict hiring freeze; deferring certain payments into the future; eliminating all non-essential discretionary spending; suspending the JHO program; and, for this year, denying all but three of the applications of Supreme Court Justices who requested certification to remain on the bench for additional two-year terms beyond age 70. Implementing these measures achieved the \$291 million reduction.

The court system collects substantial revenue through fines, fees and other means. In 2020, fines and fees totaled \$669,753,659, a figure which includes all state, county and city remedies, but does not include bail or other trusts.

\$669,753,659

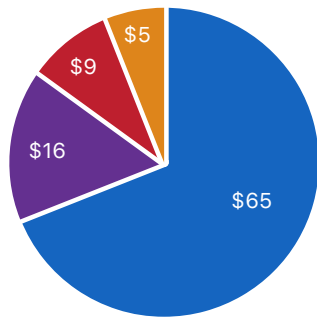
Total Fines and Fees Collected in 2020



\$306,244,493

Criminal Search History Fees Collected in 2020

\$95 Criminal Search History Fee Breakdown



- Indigent Legal Services Fund - \$209,535,706
- Judicial Data Processing Offset Fund - \$51,578,020
- Legal Services Assistance Fund - \$29,012,636
- General Fund - \$16,118,131

Criminal History Search Revenues

A portion of court system-collected revenue includes fees for services provided by the UCS 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:

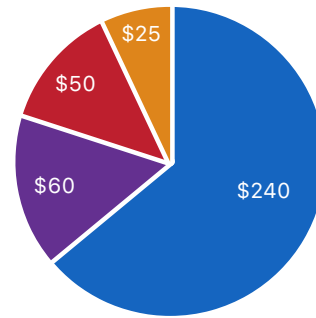
- \$65 to the Indigent Legal Services Fund
- \$16 to the Office of Court Administration's Judiciary Data Processing Offset Fund
- \$9 to the Legal Services Fund
- \$5 to the General Fund

In 2020, the Criminal History Search Unit collected \$306,244,493 for criminal history search records.

\$52,180,200

Attorney Registration Fees Collected in 2020

\$375 Attorney Registration Fee Breakdown



- Attorney Licensing Fund - \$33,398,880
- Lawyers' Fund for Client Protection - \$8,350,020
- Indigent Legal Services - \$6,955,850
- Legal Services Assistance Fund - \$3,475,450

Attorney Registration Revenues

Every attorney 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

In 2020, the UCS collected \$52,180,200 million in attorney registration fees.



Grants and Contracts

The Office of Grants and Contracts is responsible for managing external funding awarded to the UCS and for funding for a broad array of services provided to the courts and litigants. During the early period of the state's COVID "pause," the Grants Unit submitted 15 federal grant proposals and was awarded nine new federal grants. In addition, an application for COVID-19 emergency federal grant funding was coordinated with the state's Division of Criminal Justice Services to partially reimburse expenses related to personal protection equipment, plexiglass and cleaning services. Additional funding was provided by the Casey Family Programs foundation to support virtual court operations in the New York City Family Court, and from the Redlich Horowitz Foundation to develop online training for lawyers and litigants on participation in virtual court proceedings in child welfare matters. The process of developing and submitting grant proposals became a virtual, paperless process.

Throughout the year, the Grants Unit offered technical assistance to courts and administrative offices. At year end, it was managing 85 grant-funded projects administered by the Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children, the Office for Justice Initiatives, the Office of Policy and Planning, the ADR Office, the Division of Technology and trial courts throughout the state. As the fiscal impact of the pandemic unfolded, the Contracts Unit implemented temporary across-the-board funding reductions. Contracts with the Center for Court Innovation, Judicial Civil Legal Services providers, Attorney for the Child programs, Community Dispute Resolution Centers and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) programs were all impacted by the reductions. The unit identified resources to offset reductions in state funding and promoted the transition of programs to a virtual environment.

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

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 - 2020						
Applications Decided [CPL 460.20(3)(b)]						1,824
Records on Appeal Filed						89
Oral Arguments						61
Appeals Decided						96
Motions Decided						1,070
Judicial Conduct Determinations Reviewed						3
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	4	5	2	1	0	12
Permission of Court of Appeals or Judge thereof	24	30	3	1	0	58
Permission of Appellate Division or Justice thereof	11	7	1	0	0	19
Constitutional Question	0	1	2	0	0	3
Stipulation for Judgment Absolute	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	4	4
Total	39	43	8	2	4	96
Civil Cases						
Dissents in Appellate Division	4	5	2	1	0	12
Permission of Court of Appeals	14	7	3	0	0	24
Permission of Appellate Division	6	4	1	0	0	11
Constitutional Question	0	1	2	0	0	3
Stipulation for Judgment Absolute	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	4	4
Total	24	17	8	1	4	54
Criminal Cases						
Permission of Court of Appeals Judge	10	23	0	1	0	34
Permission of Appellate Division Justice	5	3	0	0	0	8
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	15	26	0	1	0	42

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

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.

Table 2: Caseload Activity in the Appellate Division - 2020									
	FIRST DEPT		SECOND DEPT		THIRD DEPT		FOURTH DEPT		TOTAL
	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal	
Records on Appeal Filed	1,646	998	3,053	511	804	243	628	476	8,359
Disposed of before argument or submission (e.g., dismissed, withdrawn, settled)	2,363	156	3,096	394	869	96	0	0	6,974
Disposed of after argument or submission:									
Affirmed	970	450	1,626	648	529	204	319	347	5,093
Reversed	189	4	703	63	94	16	86	39	1,194
Modified	218	43	279	95	81	19	93	42	870
Dismissed	34	17	475	7	109	5	136	14	797
Other	277	24	115	101	7	1	0	12	537
Total Dispositions	4,051	694	6,294	1,308	1,689	341	634	454	15,465
	FIRST DEPT		SECOND DEPT		THIRD DEPT		FOURTH DEPT		TOTAL
Oral Arguments*	1,102		1,467		471		663		3,703
Motions Decided*	3,737		6,395		5,205		4,427		19,764
Admissions to the Bar	2,186		2,192		3,652		284		8,314
Atty. Disciplinary Proceedings Decided	181		220		174		66		641

*Not broken down by civil or criminal.

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.

Table 3: Caseload Activity in the Appellate Terms - 2020							
	FIRST DEPT			SECOND DEPT			TOTAL
	Civil	Criminal	Total	Civil	Criminal	Total	
Records on Appeal Filed	85	108	193	737	231	968	1,161
Disposed of before argument or submission (e.g., dismissed, withdrawn, settled)	5	9	14	525	227	752	766
Disposed of after argument or submission:							
Affirmed	57	137	194	167	126	293	487
Reversed	20	24	44	128	50	178	222
Modified	14	1	15	41	3	44	59
Dismissed	9	2	11	25	6	31	42
Other	2	-	2	20	7	27	29
Total Dispositions	107	173	280	906	419	1,325	1,605
Oral Arguments*	196			207			403
Motions Decided*	649			1,949			2,598

*Not broken down by civil or criminal.

Trial Courts

In 2020, 1,925,133 cases were filed statewide in the trial courts. Criminal cases accounted for 29 percent. Civil cases accounted for 48 percent. Seventeen percent of the cases were in Family Court and 6 percent 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.

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.

Table 4: Filings in the Trial Courts: Five-Year Comparison

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020*
Criminal					
Supreme and County Courts Criminal ^a	46,067	44,283	43,040	39,324	19,059
Criminal Court of the City of NY ^b	566,145	434,045	313,929	278,928	150,538
City & District Courts Outside NYC ^b	637,044	631,255	592,231	570,333	379,536
Parking Tickets ^c	108,452	104,984	93,286	108,950	4,579
Criminal Total	1,357,708	1,214,567	1,042,486	997,535	553,712
Civil					
Supreme Court Civil ^d	476,058	466,113	462,237	452,414	304,214
Civil Court of the City of NY ^e	507,389	529,356	552,122	540,818	314,769
City & District Courts Outside NYC ^e	173,574	182,450	191,675	191,222	117,790
County Courts Civil ^d	110,675	108,458	93,025	83,267	86,509
Court of Claims	1,794	1,816	1,765	1,801	1,590
Small Claims Assessment Review Program	46,638	44,211	40,466	42,029	102,571
Civil Total	1,316,128	1,332,404	1,341,290	1,311,551	927,443
<i>Family^f</i>	621,107	611,470	580,548	578,346	325,694
<i>Surrogate's</i>	140,203	141,735	144,325	141,237	118,284
Total	3,435,146	3,300,176	3,108,649	3,028,669	1,925,133

*This reflects data entry as of 3/4/21.

^aIncludes felonies and misdemeanors, of which 1,364 were misdemeanor filings in 2020.

^bNYC includes arrest and summons cases; outside NYC includes arrest cases and uniform traffic tickets.

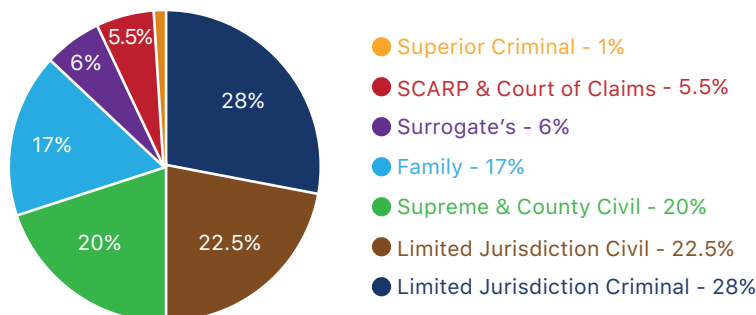
^cStarting in 2020, the count of parking tickets only include those entered in UCMS for reporting purposes.

^dIncludes new cases, ex parte applications and uncontested matrimonial cases.

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

^fIncludes Permanency Planning Hearings held.

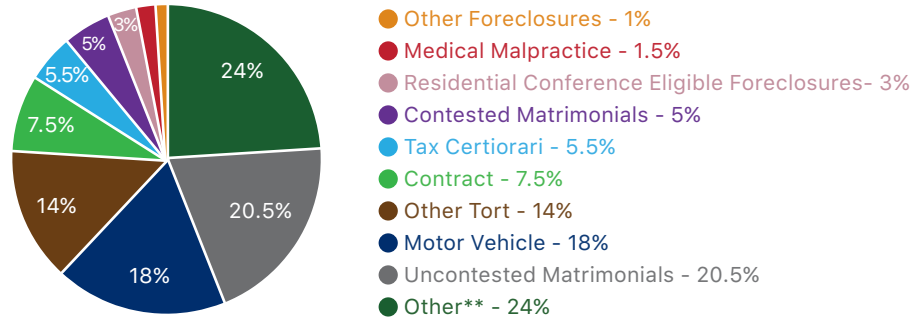
Figure A: Trial Court Filings by Case Type - 2020*



*This reflects data entry as of 3/4/21.

Supreme Court Civil Cases. During 2020, there were 304,214 civil filings in Supreme Court, including 132,391 new cases, 138,153 ex parte applications and 33,670 uncontested matrimonial cases. A total of 290,103 matters reached disposition. The Supreme Court's caseload activity is listed in TABLE 5. FIGURE B shows the breakdown of cases by manner of disposition.

Figure B: Supreme Civil Filings by Case Type - 2020*



*This reflects data entry as of 3/4/21.

**Other mostly consists of Guardianship, Arbitration, Article 78, Real Property, Mental Hygiene, and Special Proceeding cases.

Table 5: Supreme Civil Cases - 2020*

Location	FILINGS		DISPOSITIONS				
	New Cases	Note of Issue	Total	Pre-Note	Note of Issue	Settlements	Verdicts
TOTAL STATE	132,391	25,365	120,161	92,922	27,239	34,256	1,221
NYC	65,205	12,711	51,902	38,853	13,049	16,244	728
BRONX	13,760	1,863	10,382	8,709	1,673	4,905	80
KINGS	18,854	4,188	14,145	9,938	4,207	4,603	274
NEW YORK	16,030	2,644	15,008	12,363	2,645	3,457	103
QUEENS	14,031	3,428	9,690	5,735	3,955	2,492	229
RICHMOND	2,530	588	2,677	2,108	569	787	42
ONYC	67,186	12,654	68,259	54,069	14,190	18,012	493
Albany	2,795	275	2,760	2,450	310	278	1
Allegany	122	13	138	124	14	21	0
Broome	844	118	783	675	108	15	0
Cattaraugus	228	24	207	196	11	52	0
Cayuga	277	47	298	241	57	6	0
Chautauqua	405	53	412	358	54	53	0
Chemung	268	67	291	230	61	6	0
Chenango	124	21	152	123	29	7	0
Clinton	306	52	370	304	66	70	0
Columbia	253	58	255	215	40	61	0
Cortland	113	35	121	88	33	9	0
Delaware	161	29	251	197	54	20	0
Dutchess	2,057	387	1,967	1,652	315	310	10
Erie	6,640	589	5,546	5,001	545	1,052	12
Essex	131	22	186	165	21	3	0
Franklin	236	29	222	196	26	53	0
Fulton	228	49	283	229	54	106	0
Genesee	168	28	178	143	35	58	0
Greene	182	37	216	146	70	36	3
Herkimer	247	61	262	196	66	18	0
Jefferson	337	105	381	279	102	18	0

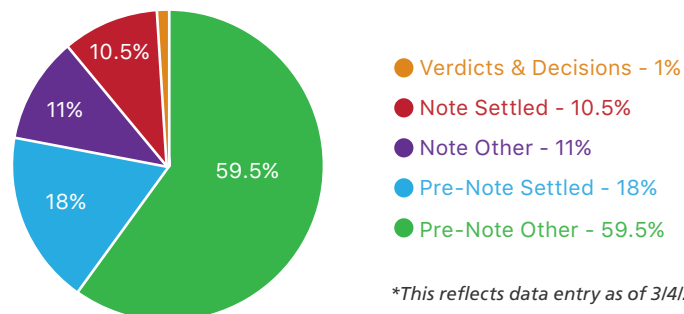
*This reflects data entry as of 3/4/21.

Table 5: Supreme Civil Cases - 2020*

Location	FILINGS		DISPOSITIONS				
	New Cases	Note of Issue	Total	Pre-Note	Note of Issue	Settlements	Verdicts
TOTAL STATE	132,391	25,365	120,161	92,922	27,239	34,256	1,221
Lewis	56	13	67	51	16	25	0
Livingston	134	28	164	126	38	8	0
Madison	151	53	149	88	61	5	0
Monroe	2,804	523	2,743	2,197	546	109	1
Montgomery	209	28	222	206	16	119	0
Nassau	12,352	2,741	12,533	8,564	3,969	5,770	151
Niagara	938	123	1,051	926	125	148	3
Oneida	1,301	294	1,235	1,007	228	138	89
Onondaga	2,135	607	2,022	1,441	581	121	2
Ontario	456	79	422	329	93	14	1
Orange	2,597	448	2,512	2,001	511	663	6
Orleans	153	6	179	169	10	31	1
Oswego	323	85	321	240	81	68	40
Otsego	174	30	165	133	32	7	0
Putnam	503	95	520	406	114	24	0
Rensselaer	643	114	654	555	99	76	6
Rockland	2,487	479	2,464	1,925	539	605	4
St. Lawrence	441	95	460	364	96	97	3
Saratoga	840	168	923	731	192	389	7
Schenectady	579	109	678	556	122	225	3
Schoharie	93	24	101	80	21	8	0
Schuyler	34	10	31	24	7	2	0
Seneca	196	13	220	205	15	3	0
Steuben	218	43	208	164	44	16	0
Suffolk	11,570	1,838	13,505	11,593	1,912	5,554	115
Sullivan	607	100	633	541	92	16	0
Tioga	149	20	151	124	27	22	0
Tompkins	211	57	248	188	60	31	9
Ulster	1,085	340	883	630	253	252	5
Warren	242	46	295	250	45	15	0
Washington	298	64	411	328	83	114	1
Wayne	349	26	332	297	35	20	0
Westchester	6,495	1,836	6,226	4,196	2,030	1,034	20
Wyoming	183	10	179	168	11	28	0
Yates	58	10	73	58	15	3	0

*This reflects data entry as of 3/4/21.

Figure C: Supreme Civil Disposition by Type of Disposition - 2020*



*This reflects data entry as of 3/4/21.

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' felony caseload are reported in combination with the felony caseload data for Supreme Court in TABLE 6.

Table 6: Supreme Criminal & County Court - Felony Cases 2020*

Location	FILINGS			DISPOSITIONS						
	Total	Indictments	SCI's**	Total	Guilty Pleas	Convictions	Acquittals	Nonjury Verdicts	Dismissals	Other
Total State	17,695	12,394	5,301	16,470	13,068	139	49	71	1,747	1,396
NYC	6,430	5,555	875	6,434	4,308	52	17	10	970	1,077
New York	1,866	1,642	224	1,989	1,218	34	8	1	329	399
Bronx	1,212	1,140	72	1,045	720	2	3	1	245	74
Kings	1,779	1,646	133	1,720	950	6	4	3	235	522
Queens	1,210	852	358	1,211	1,030	5	1	4	120	51
Richmond	363	275	88	469	390	5	1	1	41	31
ONYC	11,265	6,839	4,426	10,036	8,760	87	32	61	777	319
Albany	290	160	130	276	247	1	1	0	22	5
Allegany	37	14	23	42	39	0	0	0	2	1
Broome	322	161	161	280	243	6	3	0	27	1
Cattaraugus	166	74	92	200	192	1	1	0	4	2
Cayuga	84	48	36	90	81	2	0	1	3	3
Chautauqua	88	59	29	64	54	0	1	1	5	3
Chemung	210	207	3	119	102	0	1	0	16	0
Chenango	63	47	16	49	45	0	0	0	4	0
Clinton	157	87	70	114	101	4	0	0	9	0
Columbia	76	42	34	47	40	1	2	0	1	3
Cortland	62	29	33	62	47	2	0	0	7	6
Delaware	19	10	9	30	30	0	0	0	0	0
Dutchess	137	64	73	120	114	0	0	0	6	0
Erie	760	272	488	780	719	7	2	16	21	15
Essex	52	33	19	58	44	0	0	0	6	8
Franklin	105	86	19	81	79	0	0	0	0	2
Fulton	90	34	56	78	76	0	1	0	1	0
Genesee	182	124	58	110	101	0	0	1	2	6
Greene	84	57	27	45	38	1	0	0	0	6
Hamilton	3	0	3	4	4	0	0	0	0	0
Herkimer	46	10	36	52	43	0	0	0	2	7
Jefferson	288	173	115	182	173	1	0	0	8	0
Lewis	56	26	30	42	37	0	0	0	5	0
Livingston	134	91	43	90	83	0	0	1	0	6
Madison	99	48	51	107	103	1	0	1	2	0
Monroe	825	511	314	856	609	19	7	18	194	9

*This reflects data entry as of 3/4/21.

**Superior Court Information

Table 6: Supreme Criminal & County Court - Felony Cases 2020*

Location	FILINGS			DISPOSITIONS						
	Total	Indictments	SCI's**	Total	Guilty Pleas	Convictions	Acquittals	Nonjury Verdicts	Dismissals	Other
Total State	17,695	12,394	5,301	16,470	13,068	139	49	71	1,747	1,396
Montgomery	128	65	63	112	106	0	0	0	6	0
Nassau	1,128	584	544	917	802	4	0	3	101	7
Niagara	171	94	77	203	145	0	0	0	13	45
Oneida	364	242	122	322	304	5	1	0	5	7
Onondaga	598	436	162	497	425	8	1	2	51	10
Ontario	257	123	134	211	192	2	0	1	13	3
Orange	282	221	61	206	190	0	0	1	7	8
Orleans	49	42	7	61	57	0	0	0	2	2
Oswego	159	115	44	123	122	0	0	0	1	0
Otsego	48	37	11	38	35	1	1	0	1	0
Putnam	47	25	22	52	49	1	0	0	1	1
Rensselaer	174	133	41	145	126	0	0	1	15	3
Rockland	224	179	45	223	205	0	1	2	8	7
St. Lawrence	180	140	40	124	113	1	1	1	7	1
Saratoga	249	109	140	210	197	2	1	0	7	3
Schenectady	182	121	61	180	160	4	2	0	6	8
Schoharie	30	17	13	35	19	0	0	0	1	15
Schuyler	35	23	12	29	26	0	0	0	1	2
Seneca	65	23	42	78	69	0	0	0	8	1
Steuben	431	395	36	292	222	1	1	4	17	47
Suffolk	746	438	308	929	759	3	3	3	117	44
Sullivan	87	62	25	64	60	0	0	2	2	0
Tioga	50	27	23	53	47	0	0	0	6	0
Tompkins	69	44	25	72	63	2	0	0	5	2
Ulster	127	85	42	117	112	0	0	0	4	1
Warren	145	58	87	118	113	2	0	0	0	3
Washington	89	70	19	92	87	0	1	0	4	0
Wayne	140	104	36	114	97	1	0	0	9	7
Westchester	348	185	163	279	264	3	0	1	10	1
Wyoming	168	122	46	114	111	0	0	0	0	3
Yates	60	53	7	48	39	1	0	1	2	5

*This reflects data entry as of 3/4/21.

**Superior Court Information

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 2020, 1,590 claims were filed, and 1,185 were decided.

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 adoptions. See TABLE 7 for 2020 filings and dispositions by case type.

Table 7: Surrogate's Court Filings & Dispositions: Proceedings by Case Type - 2020*

Case Type	TOTAL STATE		NYC		OUTSIDE NYC	
	Filings	Dispositions**	Filings	Dispositions**	Filings	Dispositions**
Total	118,284	92,655	28,487	24,708	89,797	67,947
Probate	36,683	35,745	9,677	8,006	27,006	27,739
Administration	15,853	16,431	6,290	5,549	9,563	10,882
Voluntary Admin.	22,372	22,372	5,985	5,985	16,387	16,387
Accounting	22,585	3,553	2,310	1,082	20,275	2,471
<i>Inter Vivos Trust</i>	963	899	85	172	878	727
Miscellaneous	6,839	6,567	2,029	2,518	4,810	4,049
Guardianship	12,368	6,036	2,018	1,255	10,350	4,781
Adoption	608	1,039	93	141	515	898
Estate Tax	13	13	0	0	13	13

*This reflects data entry as of 3/4/21.

**Includes orders and decrees signed.

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 Family Court filings and dispositions. This table also contains filings and dispositions for the State's Integrated Domestic Violence (IDV) Courts.

Table 8: Family & Supreme Court (IDV) Filings & Dispositions by Type of Petition - 2020

Type of Petition	TOTAL STATE		NYC		OUTSIDE NYC	
	Filings	Dispositions	Filings	Dispositions	Filings	Dispositions
Total	325,694	297,306	65,603	63,158	260,091	234,148
Termination of Parental Rights	2,225	1,453	418	250	1,807	1,203
Surrender of Child	1,182	1,033	115	93	1,067	940
Child Protective (Neglect & Abuse)	30,747	23,871	9,969	7,322	20,778	16,549
Juvenile Delinquency	7,204	6,961	2,021	2,045	5,183	4,916
Designated Felony	503	263	300	135	203	128
Persons in Need of Supervision	885	1,193	139	202	746	991
Adoption	1,487	1,408	419	330	1,068	1,078
Adoption Certification	147	122	45	39	102	83
Guardianship	5,858	5,085	1,539	1,702	4,319	3,383
Custody/Visitation	103,406	92,260	13,009	15,965	90,397	76,295
Foster Care Review	104	74	62	30	42	44
Foster Care Placement	288	277	100	96	188	181
Family Offense	45,612	36,182	13,379	9,422	32,233	26,760
Paternity	9,176	9,139	2,114	2,306	7,062	6,833
Support	91,910	92,365	14,097	15,037	77,813	77,328
Uniform Interstate Family Support Act	2,622	3,239	668	984	1,954	2,255
Consent to Marry	16	20	1	5	15	15
Other	371	410	56	43	315	367
Permanency Planning Hearings Held	21,951	21,951	7,152	7,152	14,799	14,799

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 filings and dispositions by case type and county.

Table 9: New York City Civil Court: Filings & Dispositions by Case Type - 2020*								
	CIVIL ACTIONS		HOUSING		SMALL CLAIMS		COMMERCIAL CLAIMS	
	Filing ^a	Dispositions ^b	Filing ^a	Dispositions ^b	Filing	Dispositions	Filing	Dispositions
New York City	216,951	105,008	87,152	37,181	9,263	4,275	1,403	916
New York	32,091	14,805	17,075	7,056	1,620	726	333	179
Bronx	43,330	13,961	29,803	12,815	1,739	553	139	167
Kings	73,244	31,258	23,794	10,808	2,979	1,463	298	189
Queens	54,708	33,062	14,774	5,609	2,500	1,332	425	225
Richmond	13,578	11,922	1,706	893	425	201	208	156

*This reflects data entry as of 3/4/21.

^a Includes both answered and unanswered cases.

^b Includes courtroom dispositions and default judgments.

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 2020, 65 percent of the arrests were misdemeanors, with 27 percent of all cases reaching disposition by plea. Another 62 percent were dismissed; 6 percent were sent to the grand jury; 4 percent were disposed of by other means; and 1 percent pled to a superior court information. TABLE 10 shows filings and dispositions by county for both arrest cases and summons cases (cases in which an appearance ticket, returnable in court, is issued to the defendant).

Table 10: New York City Criminal Court: Filings & Dispositions - 2020				
	ARREST CASES		SUMMONS CASES	
	Filings	Dispositions	Filings*	Dispositions
New York City	89,377	76,615	61,161	44,584
New York	20,398	19,455	12,261	12,597
Bronx	17,620	14,937	15,789	10,908
Kings	25,568	21,183	18,894	9,781
Queens	21,463	17,231	13,107	9,570
Richmond	4,328	3,809	1,110	1,728

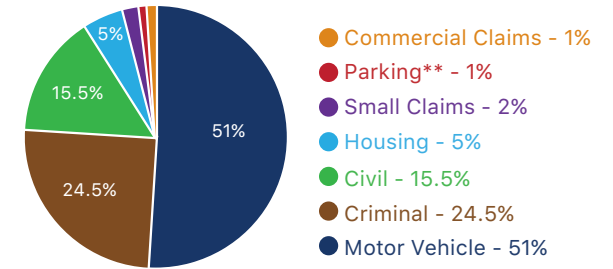
*Includes both answered and unanswered cases.

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, 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 2020, there were a total of 501,905 filings and 409,967 dispositions in the City and District Courts FIGURE D shows filings by case type; TABLE 11 contains a breakdown of filings by location and case type.

Figure D: City & District Filings by Case Type - 2020*



*This reflects data entry as of 3/4/21.

**Starting in 2020, the count of parking tickets only include those entered in UCMS for reporting purposes.

Table 11: City and District Courts: Filings by Case Type - 2020*

Total Filings: 501,905

Location	Criminal	MV	Parking**	Civil	Small Claims	L&T	Commercial
Total	123,634	255,902	4,579	77,259	10,163	26,498	3,870
Albany	1,967	13,641	127	2,249	315	1,557	109
Amsterdam	639	2,483	58	370	62	68	9
Auburn	994	1,660	295	681	102	155	36
Batavia	518	1,270	19	165	50	48	31
Beacon	274	1,066	157	147	37	49	20
Binghamton	2,270	2,952	1	806	183	448	54
Buffalo	8,472	4,579	38	4,394	833	2,761	262
Canandaigua	334	1,765	53	234	52	43	12
Cohoes	645	2,058	3	158	49	186	4
Corning	472	1,096	17	513	38	13	6
Cortland	671	1,202	1	226	69	72	68
Dunkirk	493	1,154	2	39	19	25	1
Elmira	1,360	1,289	2	424	76	192	6
Fulton	511	1,532	1	226	36	39	34
Geneva	384	1,124	5	124	20	37	0
Glen Cove	305	1,347	432	5	34	56	12
Glens Falls	590	1,699	42	364	46	65	17
Gloversville	630	817	5	465	57	198	11
Hornell	342	787	11	86	13	11	4
Hudson	396	996	4	154	39	18	44
Ithaca	963	757	13	155	81	53	17
Jamestown	2,707	2,260	233	383	78	97	71
Johnstown	198	631	4	168	21	28	2
Kingston	985	2,935	10	405	118	115	30
Lackawanna	516	3,993	4	214	91	255	18
Little Falls	75	259	0	122	54	6	42
Lockport	629	965	44	564	99	82	48

*This reflects data entry as of 3/4/21.

**Starting in 2020, the count of parking tickets only include those entered in UCMS for reporting purposes.

Table 11: City and District Courts: Filings by Case Type - 2020*							Total Filings: 501,905
Location	Criminal	MV	Parking**	Civil	Small Claims	L&T	Commercial
Total	123,634	255,902	4,579	77,259	10,163	26,498	3,870
Long Beach	1,197	980	2	9	39	83	2
Mechanicville	289	618	2	144	34	19	37
Middletown	1,350	4,479	17	968	134	133	35
Mount Vernon	2,084	4,550	34	335	89	1,024	23
New Rochelle	1,391	6,565	22	419	135	495	21
Newburgh	1,188	3,318	39	510	109	221	34
Niagara Falls	2,452	4,270	177	978	76	603	20
North Tonawanda	559	4,089	1	247	76	48	30
Norwich	336	480	2	189	38	18	8
Ogdensburg	482	538	0	192	58	36	53
Olean	629	1,124	4	148	46	41	15
Oneida	830	1,840	23	633	22	59	6
Oneonta	321	463	4	136	33	13	13
Oswego	1,085	2,665	1	338	98	45	11
Peekskill	770	2,472	10	166	66	136	3
Plattsburgh	631	866	12	145	61	87	37
Port Jervis	514	1,282	3	120	29	44	5
Poughkeepsie	1,063	2,331	499	508	182	567	27
Rensselaer	161	602	3	240	38	73	22
Rochester	6,947	5,631	33	1,406	1,011	2,598	263
Rome	1,086	4,490	11	663	81	186	12
Rye	147	2,793	14	25	41	18	15
Salamanca	454	616	3	79	30	3	1
Saratoga Springs	1,168	3,246	435	252	105	163	44
Schenectady	2,211	5,557	42	906	258	880	59
Sherrill	17	86	0	59	14	0	0
Syracuse	6,957	13,148	10	2,126	427	1,190	77
Tonawanda	421	2,372	42	331	84	13	47
Troy	1,431	3,605	12	1,138	140	1,462	33
Utica	2,768	5,986	3	919	229	541	108
Watertown	1,117	1,890	4	430	71	176	47
Watervliet	295	1,969	0	252	40	121	3
White Plains	1,382	5,058	1,226	210	149	203	30
Yonkers	4,607	12,038	116	1,088	236	2,024	140
Nassau District	11,954	45,176	118	16,446	1,518	2,805	903
Suffolk District	35,000	42,392	74	30,663	1,694	3,693	718

*This reflects data entry as of 3/4/21.

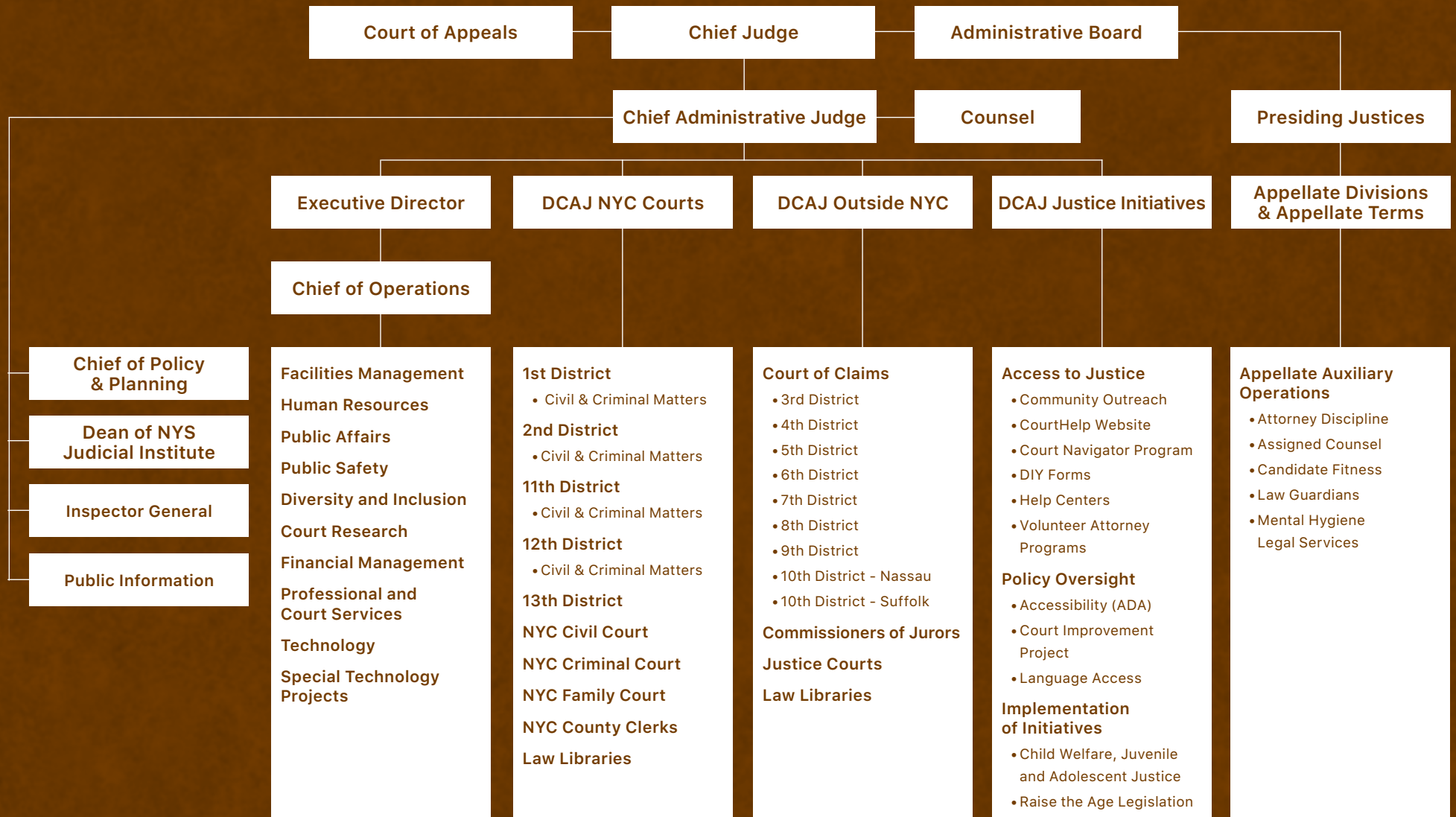
**Starting in 2020, the count of parking tickets only include those entered in UCMS for reporting purposes.

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 1,197 Town and Village Courts and 1,776 Town and Village Justices.



NEW YORK STATE Unified Court System

Administrative Structure



Office of Court Administration

The New York State Unified Court System is administered by the Office of Court Administration (OCA) under the authority of the Chief Judge and Chief Administrative Judge. OCA provides financial management, automation, public safety, personnel management and other essential services to support day-to-day court operations. OCA is comprised of the following divisions:

- **Division of Financial Management** prepares the Judiciary budget and formulates and implements fiscal policies.
- **Counsel's Office** provides legal advice to court administrators; prepares and analyzes legislation; and represents the Unified Court System in litigation.
- **Inspector General's Office** is responsible for the investigation and elimination of infractions of discipline standards, conflicts of interest and criminal activities on the part of non-judicial employees and individuals or corporations doing business with the courts.
- **Division of Human Resources** is responsible for personnel and benefits administration and providing education and training programs to the non-judicial and uniformed workforce. This Division also administers equal employment opportunity policies and programs and negotiates with the court system's labor unions.
- **Division of Professional and Court Services** provides support and guidance to trial court operations including alternative dispute resolution and court improvement programs, court interpreting services, legal information, records management and operational issues related to the American with Disabilities Act.
- **Division of Technology and Court Research** provides automation and telecommunications services to all courts and agencies, including oversight of the statewide Domestic Violence Registry and the courts' technical support center.
- **Office of Public Information** coordinates communications and serves as liaison with the media.
- **Office of Public Affairs** promotes awareness of the work of UCS among the public, the legal community and UCS employees.
- **Department of Public Safety** responsible for developing and implementing uniform policies and procedures to ensure the safety and accessibility of state courthouses.
- **Office of Court Facilities Management** provides oversight to localities in relation to the maintenance, renovation and construction of court facilities.
- **Office of Policy and Planning** develops best practice standards for the courts, reviews ways to streamline court operations and improve case processing and designs legal and operational seminars for court employees.
- **Office of Diversity and Inclusion** promotes and supports diversity in hiring and promotion in the court system's workforce and promotes practices that ensure a bias-free workplace.
- **Office of Special Projects and Technology** develops and implements statewide technology initiatives.
- **Office of Internal Affairs** conducts internal audits and investigations to support the attainment of long-term UCS goals.
- **Office of Justice Court Support** provides assistance and oversight to Town and Village Justice Courts.



New York State Assembly Chamber

Measures Enacted into Law in 2020

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, matrimonial practice and the local courts.

During the 2020 legislative session, Counsel's Office, with the assistance of the Chief Administrative Judge's advisory committees, prepared and submitted 30 new measures for legislative consideration. Ultimately, two were enacted into law, including the Judiciary Budget bill. This legislative success rate was far less than that usually enjoyed by the Unified Court System. The Judiciary's agenda, along with the agendas of so many others who annually petition the Legislature for changes in State law, was a casualty of an abbreviated legislative session that gave most of its attention to coping with the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Chapter 51** (Senate 7501/Assembly 9501). Enacts the 2020-21 Judiciary Budget. Eff. 4/1/20.
- **Chapter 299** (Senate 6533/Assembly 7970). Amends the Family Court Act in relation to video recording of interrogations of juveniles in juvenile delinquency proceedings in family court. Eff. 11/1/21.







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