

A photograph of the Onondaga County Supreme Court building in Syracuse, NY. The building is a grand, classical-style structure with a prominent portico supported by tall columns. It features a large central dome and several smaller domes on towers. The sky is a mix of blue and pinkish-purple, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. In the foreground, there are stone steps and a monument with the year '1830' visible.

NEW YORK STATE UNIFIED COURT SYSTEM  
**2018 ANNUAL REPORT**



Allegheny County Courthouse, Belmont, NY. Photo by John E. Deacon, www.courthouses.co.



New York State Unified Court System

# 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

Report of the Chief Administrator of the Courts

for the Calendar Year January 1 through December 31, 2018

**Janet DiFiore**

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

**Lawrence K. Marks**

*Chief Administrative Judge of the State of New York*

**Associate Judges of the Court of Appeals**

Jenny Rivera  
Leslie E. Stein  
Eugene M. Fahey  
Michael J. Garcia  
Rowan D. Wilson  
Paul G. Feinman

**Presiding Justices of the Appellate Division**

Rolando T. Acosta  
*First Department*  
Alan D. Scheinkman  
*Second Department*  
Elizabeth A. Garry  
*Third Department*  
Gerald J. Whalen  
*Fourth Department*

**Deputy Chief Administrative Judges**

Michael V. Coccoma  
*Deputy Chief Administrative Judge, Courts Outside New York City*  
Edwina G. Mendelson  
*Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Justice Initiatives*  
George J. Silver  
*Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for the New York City Courts*

**New York State Unified Court System**

Hon. Sherry Klein Heitler  
*Chief of Policy and Planning*  
Hon. Juanita Bing Newton  
*Dean, NYS Judicial Institute*  
Barry Clarke  
*Chief of Operations*  
John W. McConnell  
*Counsel and Administrator for Management Support*  
Ronald P. Younkins  
*Executive Director, Office of Court Administration (retired April 2018)*

Sherrill Spatz  
*Inspector General*

**Administrative Judges New York City**

Deborah A. Kaplan  
*Civil Matters, First Judicial District*  
Ellen N. Biben  
*Criminal Matters, First Judicial District*  
Lawrence Knipel  
*Civil Matters, Second Judicial District*  
Matthew J. D'Emic  
*Criminal Matters, Second Judicial District*  
Jeremy Weinstein  
*Civil Matters, Eleventh Judicial District*  
Joseph Zayas  
*Criminal Matters, Eleventh Judicial District*  
Robert Torres  
*Criminal Matters, Twelfth Judicial District*

Desmond A. Green  
*Civil & Criminal Matters, Thirteenth Judicial District*

Jeanette Ruiz  
*NYC Family Court*

Tamiko Amaker  
*NYC Criminal Court*

Anthony Cannataro  
*NYC Civil Court*

**Administrative Judges Outside New York City**

Thomas A. Breslin  
*Third Judicial District*  
Vito C. Caruso  
*Fourth Judicial District*  
James C. Tormey III  
*Fifth Judicial District*  
Molly Reynolds Fitzgerald  
*Sixth Judicial District*  
Craig J. Doran  
*Seventh Judicial District*  
Paula L. Feroletto  
*Eighth Judicial District*  
Kathie E. Davidson  
*Ninth Judicial District*  
Thomas A. Adams  
*Nassau County*  
C. Randall Hinrichs  
*Suffolk County*  
Richard E. Sise  
*Acting Presiding Judge, Court of Claims*



Court of Appeals, Albany, NY.



Chief Judge DiFiore delivers her 2018 State of Our Judiciary in February at the Court of Appeals.

# Table of Contents

<b>Rising to the Challenge: A Message from the Chief Administrative Judge</b> .....	1	• Addressing the Foreclosure Crisis .....	27
<b>Pursuing Excellence</b> .....	3	• Partnering with Town and Village Courts: The Courts Closest to the People .....	27
• Reducing Backlogs and Delays .....	3	• Connecting with Indian Nation Courts .....	28
<b>Bridging the Justice Gap</b> .....	5	<b>Achieving Excellence in Commercial Litigation: The Commercial Division</b> .....	29
• Providing Access to Counsel: The Judiciary Civil Legal Services Program.....	5	<b>Seeking Excellence Through Inclusion and Fairness</b> .....	31
• Charting the Path Forward: The Permanent Commission on Access to Justice.....	5	• The Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission	32
• Making it Happen: The Office for Justice Initiatives .....	6	• The New York State Judicial Committee on Women in the Courts .....	32
<b>Refining the Criminal Justice System</b> .....	8	• The Richard C. Failla LGBTQ Commission.....	33
• Raising the Age of Criminal Responsibility .....	8	<b>Enhancing Access to Information</b> .....	35
• The New York State Justice Task Force .....	9	• 1-800-COURT-NY .....	35
<b>Training and Technology</b> .....	11	• Public Information .....	35
• Training of Court Officers .....	12	• Social Media .....	35
• Harnessing the Power of Technology .....	14	• Public Affairs.....	35
• Transforming Litigation with E-Filing.....	14	<b>Court Structure and Caseload Activity</b> .....	37
• Embracing Electronic Testing .....	15	• Appellate Courts .....	37
<b>Making Courts Accessible</b> .....	17	• Trial Courts.....	39
• Speaking the Language .....	17	<b>Office of Court Administration</b> .....	49
• Ensuring Access for Persons with Disabilities ..	18	<b>Fiscal Overview</b> .....	50
<b>Facilitating Dispute Resolution Through ADR</b> ...	19	• Criminal History Search Revenues .....	50
<b>Addressing the Needs of Society</b> .....	21	• Attorney Registration Revenues.....	51
• Dealing with Causes: Problem-Solving Courts .	21	• Grants and Contracts .....	51
• Meeting the Needs of Families and Children...	24	<b>Measures Enacted into Law in 2018</b> .....	52



New York County Supreme Court, Manhattan, NY.



# Rising to the Challenge: A Message from the Chief Administrative Judge

The strong foundation we established through Chief Judge DiFiore’s Excellence Initiative in 2016-2017 led to high expectations for the Judiciary in 2018. As the Chief Judge said in her February 2018 State of Our Judiciary address:

*“We are poised and positioned to build upon everything we have achieved to date. We have every good reason to be excited about the future of our Judiciary.”*

I am proud to report that our accomplishments in the year that followed did not disappoint those expectations. Among the highlights were:

- We reduced case backlogs in all levels of courts in every part of the State, providing better service to New Yorkers.
- We met the challenge of preparing the courts and stakeholders for implementation of the State’s Raise the Age legislation, that increased the age of adolescent criminal responsibility — a seismic change in the way the courts deal with those 17 and younger.
- We responded to the opioid crisis and opened a range of new specialty courts.
- We took steps toward more fully embracing Alternative Dispute Resolution as a means to expedite cases and enhance access to justice.
- We opened a new, state-of-the-art training facility for court officers, promoted inclusion and diversity, and made significant progress in ensuring access to justice for our most vulnerable citizens.

This annual report chronicles and quantifies our 2018 achievements. It is not an exhaustive compendium of our successes, how we prepared for the future or what we expect to accomplish going forward with the support of our partners in government. But it is a representative snapshot. I hope you find it informative and interesting.

As always, if you have ideas or suggestions about what we can do better, the Chief Judge and I want to know. Please send us a note through the Excellence Initiative website at [www.nycourts.gov/excellence-initiative](http://www.nycourts.gov/excellence-initiative).

Sincerely,

Lawrence K. Marks



Bronx County Supreme Court, Bronx NY.



## Pursuing Excellence

**E**xcellence means never resting on laurels, never accepting the status quo, always looking for new ways to achieve old goals and seeking new challenges. It means trying hard is not enough. It means results.

Since her very first day in office, Chief Judge Janet DiFiore has not only stressed, but demanded, excellence. Her signature Excellence Initiative is an ongoing exercise in self-evaluation, improvement, innovation and accountability—all of which requires a culture of productivity and professionalism. It is an evidence-based approach, with a mindset that what gets measured gets addressed.

*“Our overarching goal is simple, and it goes to the very heart of our constitutional obligation – to fairly and promptly adjudicate every case that comes before us.”*

Chief Judge DiFiore

### Reducing Backlogs and Delays

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.

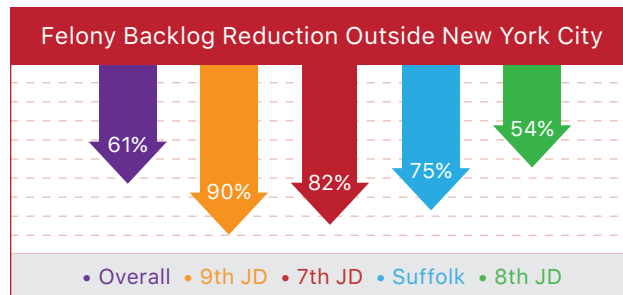
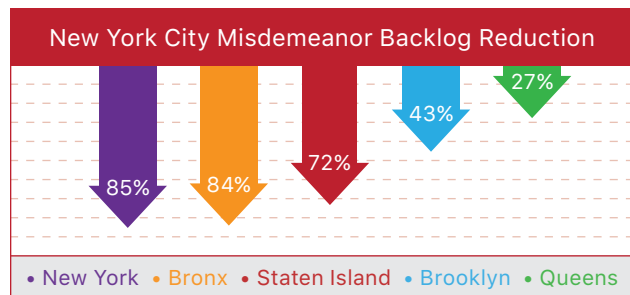
Every single day our judges address issues such as: whether someone goes to jail for committing a crime; whether a family is evicted from its home; whether an at-risk child is removed from her home; which parent gets custody of the children; whether someone can collect damages after suffering a personal injury; determining shareholder rights within a corporation; settling the estate of a loved one; appointing a guardian to protect the interests of an incapacitated person. Those issues must be addressed in a timely manner.

The courts use a number of barometers, including “standards and goals,” for the timely resolution of different categories of cases: in criminal cases, 90 days for misdemeanors and 180 days (from filing of an indictment) for felonies; in civil cases in Supreme Court, 23 months for expedited cases, 27 months for standard cases, 30 months for complex cases, and 12 months for contested matrimonial cases; in Family Court, 180 days. Cases that have not been resolved within these established benchmarks are considered “over standards and goals.”

*“We must remain focused on our Excellence Initiative, making sure that our courts are meeting their constitutional obligation to provide timely, efficient and affordable justice to all New Yorkers.”*

Chief Judge DiFiore

Under the Excellence Initiative, the New York Courts have dramatically improved their performance in resolution of criminal cases (both felony and misdemeanor), Family Court matters and civil disputes. Here are some examples:

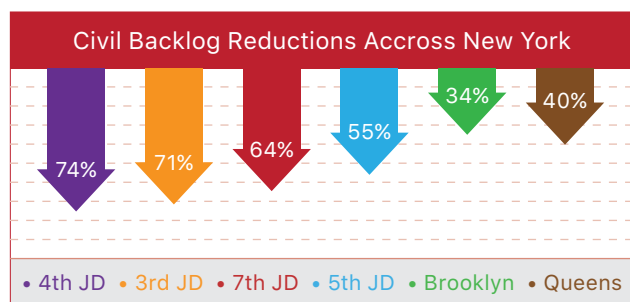


### Misdemeanors

- In Manhattan, the number of misdemeanors pending for more than a year has been reduced 85 percent. The oldest misdemeanor cases have been slashed by 84% in the Bronx, 72% in Staten Island, 43% in Brooklyn and 27% in Queens.
- Misdemeanor cases over standards and goals on Long Island have been reduced 53%.
- The number of misdemeanors pending elsewhere in city courts over standards and goals is down 54%, including decreases of 73% in the Fourth Judicial District, 73% in the Sixth Judicial District, 74% in the Eighth Judicial District and 65% in the Ninth Judicial District.

### Family Court

- Outside New York City, only 4% of Family Court cases are over standards and goals.
- In New York City, Family Court has managed to hold its own despite a surge in neglect and abuse cases, among the most difficult cases handled in the Family Court.



### Felonies

- Supreme Court in the Bronx has reduced the number of felonies one year and older by 45%.
- In Queens, the number of felony cases over two years old has declined by 76%.
- Outside New York City, the number of felony cases pending over our six-month standards and goals benchmark has been cut by 61%, highlighted by reductions of 90% in the Ninth Judicial District; 82% in the Seventh Judicial District; 75% in Suffolk County; and 54% in the Eighth Judicial District.

### Civil Matters

- The percentage of pending cases over standards and goals has been cut by 74% in the Fourth Judicial District, 71% in the Third Judicial District, 64% in the Seventh Judicial District and 55% in the Fifth Judicial District.
- In 2018 alone, the number of civil cases in the Bronx awaiting trial was reduced by 24%.
- Cases over standards and goals in Queens County Supreme Court dropped 40%; foreclosure cases over standards and goals declined 47%.
- In Kings County Supreme Court, cases over standards and goals have dropped 34% and foreclosure cases over standards and goals are down 42%.



*“In the accountability-centric Excellence Initiative, we have to not only come up with and implement great ideas, but examine what we do, how well we do it and whether anyone is really better off for our efforts.”*

Hon. Edwina G. Mendelson,  
Deputy Chief Administrative  
Judge for Justice Initiatives

## Bridging the Justice Gap

The mission of the Unified Court System is to provide meaningful access to justice for all of those passing through the doors of every New York State Civil, Criminal and Family Court — regardless of income, background, language or special need.

### Providing Access to Counsel: The Judiciary Civil Legal Services Program

The inability of many New Yorkers to afford counsel is perhaps the most pervasive barrier to access to justice. Competent legal advice can mean the difference between homelessness and shelter, and between hunger and adequate nutrition.

In 2012, the UCS established the Judiciary Civil Legal Services (JCLS) program to address the crisis in representation in civil legal matters, exemplified by the fact that more than 90 percent of low-income New Yorkers were then appearing without counsel in civil matters involving such issues as housing, health care, subsistence income and other essentials of life. Many of the non-represented litigants face traumatic consequences, including eviction from their homes.

In fiscal year 2017-18, 78 civil legal services providers reported 483,604 cases handled, benefiting more than 2.5 million New Yorkers, including victims of domestic violence. Judiciary Civil Legal Services funding enabled providers to retain staff, hire additional staff, launch new initiatives, partner with outside communities and other civil legal services programs, enhance training and outreach and better respond to the needs of the communities they serve.

### Charting the Path Forward: The Permanent Commission on Access to Justice

The Permanent Commission on Access to Justice, chaired by Helaine Barnett, was established in 2010, initially as the Task Force to Expand Access to Civil Legal Services in New York. It has an ongoing obligation to study, analyze and develop recommendations on all aspects of civil legal services to low-income New Yorkers, to issue recommendations providing for improved and increased access and to collaborate on access to justice issues, including expanded pro bono services and help for unrepresented litigants. Over the past decade, New York has emerged as a national leader on access-to-justice issues, thanks in no small measure to the \$100 million annually allocated by the Judiciary via its Civil Legal Services Program, including \$15 million to be allocated for distribution by the New York State Interest on Lawyer Account. In 2018, grants were distributed among 83



At a hearing on civil justice needs, Chief Judge DiFiore underscored the significant progress made in providing legal assistance to low income New Yorkers. From left to right: Adriene Holder Esq., Attorney-in-Charge of the Civil Practice of The Legal Aid Society; Helaine Barnett, Esq., Chair of the New York State Permanent Commission on Access to Justice; Morenike Fajana, Esq., Legal Aid Society; Hon. Janet DiFiore, Chief Judge of the State of New York; Abby Tejada; Altagracia Tejada (Client); Daniel Vasquez, Paralegal, Legal Aid Society.

providers statewide and allocated based on the proportion of the population living at or below 200 percent of the poverty line.

### Legal Hand

The Legal Hand initiative builds on the successful Court Navigator program, which utilizes trained non-lawyer volunteers to provide basic information and support to unrepresented litigants in housing and consumer credit cases in New York City. While the Navigator program operates in courtrooms and courthouses, Legal Hand makes such assistance readily available in neighborhood offices in underserved communities.

In August, Chief Judge DiFiore and Chief Administrative Judge Marks announced the launch of Legal Hand storefront centers in the Bronx neighborhoods of Highbridge and Tremont.

### Making it Happen: The Office for Justice Initiatives

The Office for Justice Initiatives (OJI) under the direction of Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Edwina G. Mendelson, engages in community outreach efforts and supports a number of programs—such as *CourtHelp*, a website to help litigants obtain easy-to-understand legal

information and instructions for managing their court cases. It manages volunteer attorney programs, as well as the Court Navigators initiative. It also maintains Help Centers located in courts throughout the state to assist litigants in navigating the court system without a lawyer.



In 2018, OJI:

- Collaborated with the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Center for Elder Justice at the Hebrew Home in Riverdale to institute new training sessions for judges, court attorneys and guardians on identifying visible and invisible disabilities, and how to assist mentally ill and elderly individuals.
- Revamped the Court Navigator training program.
- Established new Help Centers in Surrogate’s Courts in Brooklyn and the Bronx.



Grand opening celebration to mark the establishment of a Help Center in the Kings County Surrogate's Court. This is the first Help Center to open under the leadership of Judge Mendelson and the twenty-ninth Help Center to open in New York State. From left to right: Edwina G. Mendelson, DCAJ for Justice Initiatives; Acting Surrogate John Ingram; Surrogate Margarita Lopez Torres; Lillian Claudio-Blum, Principal Court Attorney; Chief Clerk Doreen Quinn; and David M. Chidekel, Brooklyn Bar Association President.

- Formed a Plain Language Committee in conjunction with the Permanent Commission on Access to Justice to ensure that informational materials issued by the Unified Court System are clear, concise and easy to understand.

### Child Welfare Court Improvement Project

The Child Welfare Court Improvement Project (CWCIP) is a federally funded initiative to support the Family Court's mandate to promote the safety, well-being and permanent placement of children who are often traumatized by abuse, neglect, time in foster care, the termination of their parents' rights and adoption proceedings. It is overseen by the Office for Justice Initiatives.

OJI works with the NYS Office of Children and Family Services to promote data-driven, continuous quality improvement, and it is based on a collaborative approach and the premise that neither the courts nor the social service provider can unilaterally succeed in the pursuit of excellence in the child welfare and legal-judicial systems. Through that collaboration much was achieved in 2018:

- Six new counties —Niagara, Putnam, Rockland, Ulster, Wayne and Wyoming—joined the 19 counties already working with CWCIP.

- A multi-year research project on the quality of permanency hearings in 12 counties was completed, resulting in publication of statewide findings, a best practice guide and a self-assessment tool kit. All the documents are available on the CWCIP website at [nycourts.gov/ip/cwcip](http://nycourts.gov/ip/cwcip).
- In October 2018, with the support of the Casey Family programs, CWCIP hosted a full-day meeting with Family Court judicial leaders from across the state to begin strategic planning for 2019.



NY Quality Permanency Hearings Statewide Findings Report.  
[www.nycourts.gov/ip/cwcip/index.shtml](http://www.nycourts.gov/ip/cwcip/index.shtml)

# Refining the Criminal Justice System

**I**mproving fairness, effectiveness and accuracy in our criminal justice system is central to the theme of the Excellence Initiative.



## Raising the Age of Criminal Responsibility

Although legislative reform had been on the horizon for many years, New York had long remained one of the few states in the nation that continued to treat 16- and 17-year-olds as adults in matters of criminal responsibility. Legislation passed in 2017 changed that paradigm, requiring both structural modification and a fundamentally different way of thinking. The legislation directed that, as of Oct. 1, 2018, most cases involving 16-year-olds would be adjudicated in Family Court. Cases involving 17-year-olds will follow on Oct. 1, 2019. However, implementing this new approach was not simply a matter of shifting cases from Criminal to Family Court.

The Raise the Age law (RTA) became effective on Oct. 1, 2018 and treats 16-year-olds charged with misdemeanor offenses in Family Court. The law will be expanded to include 17-year-old offenders on Oct. 1, 2019. Felony charges against such youth are filed in the Youth Part of the superior court, but the court is required to remove cases charging less serious felony offenses to Family Court within 30 days unless the prosecutor can establish that "extraordinary circumstances" exist to adjudicate the case in the adult criminal justice system. In all cases, those charged in Youth Parts will no longer be housed in adult facilities or jails, but in specialized juvenile detention facilities.

The Office for Justice Initiatives, under the leadership of Justice Mendelson, and the office of Justice Michael V. Cocco, Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for the Courts Outside New York City, were tasked with readying the court system and its judges for this enormous challenge.

They began by forming a task force of court system personnel to formulate a consistent, statewide implementation plan. That task force worked closely with stakeholders outside the courts, including the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, the Division of Criminal Justice Services, the Division of the Budget, the Office of Children and Family Services, the New York City Office for the Administration for Children's Services and the NYC Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice.

The task force created working implementation models, or templates, for Youth Parts and Family Courts in New York City as well as urban, suburban and rural areas throughout the state.



Deputy Chief Administrative Judges Edwina G. Mendelson and Michael V. Coccoma discuss the Raise-the-Age legislation at a judicial summer seminar in Rye Brook, N.Y.

The Unified Court System relocated courtrooms and modified judicial and non-judicial assignments to ensure adequate RTA- related staffing. The UCS task force also worked on legal education and training of both judicial and non-judicial personnel. The Judicial Institute organized the statutorily required specialized training session for Youth Part judges and accessible magistrates, which included extensive training for Youth Part judges over the summer. The Office of Justice Court Support worked closely with the justice courts to ensure they were well-equipped to deal with the legislative mandates.

To help implement Raise the Age, our Division of Technology adapted the Unified Court System’s caseload management systems for use in all New York State Youth Parts. The result is a single database containing all RTA data, and the ability to electronically track cases removed from superior court to Family Court and probation. This system will improve dispositions, reporting to the State Division of Criminal Justice Services and probation departments, and is ideal for ongoing data analysis—which, of course, is central to the Excellence Initiative model.

Court attorneys received regional training in Albany, Syracuse and New York City, and court clerks received regional and local trainings over the summer that will continue on an ongoing basis.

Overall, the court system reconfigured its juvenile justice system in a way that will provide fair and just outcomes for children while promoting public safety.

### **The New York State Justice Task Force**

The New York State Justice Task Force was established in 2009, following disclosure of numerous cases of wrongful conviction around the nation, to examine ways to avert these egregious injustices in New York State. The Task Force, now led by former Court of Appeals Judge Carmen Beauchamp Ciparick and Acting Supreme Court Justice Mark Dwyer, has helped implement numerous reforms to address the systemic causes of wrongful convictions, including expansion of the State’s DNA Databank, greater access to post-conviction DNA testing by defendants, videotaping of custodial interrogations and improved identification procedures. It is also a leader in the area of bail reform.





*“We cannot overstate the importance of ongoing judicial education – the regular training of our Judiciary on both challenging issues of law and changing practices of court and case management – in meeting the goals of the Excellence Initiative. The Judicial Institute is a crucial tool in this process.”*

Hon. Juanita Bing Newton serves as dean of the NYS Judicial Institute in White Plains

## Training and Technology

**E**xcellence cannot be achieved in any endeavor without rigorous and continuing education. This is especially true of a highly complex organization such as the court system, which is subject to ever-changing laws and rules. For that reason, a renewed emphasis on training, for both judges and court staff, has been a centerpiece of the Excellence Initiative.

The primary goal of our judicial education program is to promote both decisional and operational excellence. Therefore, our programs for judges feature both substantive topics, such as updates on changes in legislative and decisional law, and skills-based training on such topics as effective jury management, working with court interpreters and case management techniques. Ethics training is also critically important to ensure that judges are fully aware of the ethics issues they may confront.

Our state-of-the-art New York State Judicial Institute (JI) in White Plains provides statewide education and training for the judges and non-judicial personnel employed by the Unified Court System. Created by a special act of the New York State Legislature, the Judicial Institute provides a forum for judicial scholarship that includes continuing education seminars and conferences, as well as cooperative educational programs with the National Judicial College and other groups.

In 2018:

- Approximately 85 newly elected or appointed judges were offered an intensive program of skills-based training, with an emphasis on practice and procedure, at the JI’s annual New Judges Seminar.
- Over 1,000 New York State judges received continuing judicial education at the annual Judicial Summer Seminars.
- More than 100 new legal course offerings for judicial and non-judicial employees were broadcast in both live and web-based formats.
- The New York Legal Education Opportunity Program (LEO) enabled 20 minority, low income and economically disadvantaged future law students to receive advanced training to prepare them for the rigors of law school.
- Four regional educational seminars (Buffalo, Saratoga, Bronx County and Nassau County) were held for court attorneys and other non-judicial staff.
- The Medical Malpractice Symposium brought together over 75 judges, practitioners and medical professionals covering a wide-ranging field of topics concerning medical malpractice.



Approximately 85 newly elected or appointed judges were offered an intensive program of skills-based training, with an emphasis on practice and procedure, at the JI’s annual New Judges Seminar.

- The Faculty Development Program provided over 30 potential future presenters for the Judicial Institute program with training in the use of technology, learning theory and presentation skills.

The UCS also provides training and other resources relating to the special, and often difficult, issues that attend judicial elections. The Judicial Campaign Ethics Center (JCEC) was created as a central resource on campaign ethics for judicial candidates and also provides the public with information about the judicial election process.

**233**  
Judicial Candidates Trained

In 2018, the Center provided campaign ethics training to 233 judicial candidates. Ultimately, there were 189 candidates in the general election vying for 118 state-paid elective seats. The JCEC also fielded more than 300 ethics inquiries from judicial candidates throughout the year.

**1 Credit**  
Diversity, Inclusion and Elimination of Bias

Our training commitment, of course, is not limited to judges. Lawyers are required to complete Continuing Legal Education programs and the New York State Continuing Legal Education Board

regularly reviews and adjusts the requirements. Effective Jan. 1, 2018, the CLE Board approved a new subject matter requirement for experienced attorneys – one credit in Diversity, Inclusion and Elimination of Bias for each biennial reporting cycle.

### Training of Court Officers

*“Because we expect so very much from each of our court officers, we owe them much in return and we owe them every opportunity to train to excellence, to perfect the skills, the knowledge, and the judgment they need to protect the public and to ensure their own personal safety.”*

Chief Judge DiFiore

Our 4,000 New York State uniformed court officers represent one of the largest law enforcement agencies in the country. They are charged with ensuring the safety and security of one of the largest, busiest and most complex court systems in the world. Notwithstanding the inherent challenges, the New York court system is one of the safest in the country.

In December 2018, the court system inaugurated a new, state-of-the-art training facility dedicated to the memories of three heroic New York State court officers who perished in the 9/11 World



Court Officers celebrate Law Day at the Court of Appeals in Albany with the Chief Judge and Chief Administrative Judge.

Trade Center rescue efforts: Captain William H. Thompson, Sergeant Thomas Jurgens and Sergeant Mitchell Wallace.

*“This new training academy will enable the court system to more effectively prepare our officers to meet the security challenges of today’s society and better serve the public.”*

Chief Michael Magliano

This new academy in Crown Heights, Brooklyn will serve as the primary training center for court officers.

In September, items from the National September 11th Memorial & Museum in New York City commemorating the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks were put on display at the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Headquarters in Washington, D.C. The items include the service weapon and shield of Captain Thompson, as well as a part of the service weapon of Sergeant Jurgens.

*“Our courthouses will not be safe unless we have sufficient numbers of highly trained uniformed court officers throughout the state.”*

Chief Administrative Judge Marks



A technician inspects the badge of fallen court Captain Thompson.



Court Officers of the Third and Fourth Judicial Districts were honored for their outstanding service and professionalism at a Recognition Service held Friday, June 22, 2018. The ceremony was presided over by Hon. Michael V. Coccoma, Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Courts Outside of NYC, and Hon. Vito C. Caruso, Administrative Judge for the 4th Judicial District.



Court Officers Dedication: Chief Judge DiFiore and Chief Administrative Judge Marks in December joined court, local and state officials to inaugurate a state-of-the-art training facility dedicated to the memory of three heroic New York State Court Officers who perished in the 9/11 World Trade Center attacks.

## Harnessing the Power of Technology

In addition to its RTA-related work, the Division of Technology introduced a number of innovations in 2018 to support Chief Judge DiFiore’s Excellence Initiative. It released several new data “dashboards” in various areas of court operations (including Family Court support proceedings and Surrogate’s Court matters), allowing administrators and court staff to view and analyze their pending caseloads on demand.

Other innovations:

- Court Research created the Surrogate’s Court Excellence Initiative Resource Center, and helped develop standards and goals guidelines.
- DoT launched Phase 1 of an initiative to enable the Appellate Division in each department to accept filings prior to perfection, filings to perfect an appeal, filings in an existing appeal and internal clerk filings.
- DoT’s new jury management application completed its first full year with all 62 counties on a far more efficient platform.

- A project between the Office of Justice Court Support and DoT was implemented to require the use of the WebDVS system by the Town and Village Justice Courts to electronically register all orders of protection issued by the Justice Courts.
- DoT created a program to provide New York City Marshals with electronic notification via email and the web when the NYC Housing Court issues a stay on a Warrant of Eviction. Previously, court staff made phone calls to the Marshals for each stay issued. This will save hundreds of calls per day, freeing up staff to better serve the Court and the public.

## Transforming Litigation with E-Filing

*In 2018, e-filing was introduced in all four Departments of the Appellate Division.*

The UCS electronic filing program continues to expand, offering significant cost savings and productivity enhancements to both the courts and litigants.

*“We are committed to taking the fullest advantage of technology to help us adjudicate the challenging disputes that 21st-century litigation can present.”*

Chief Administrative Judge Marks



The New York Legal Opportunity Program, or NY LEO, helps promote academic success for individuals historically underrepresented in the legal profession. Here is the class of '18 NY LEO Fellows with Court of Appeals Senior Associate Judge Jenny Rivera (front row center) and Judicial Institute Dean Juanita Bing Newton (standing at far left).

Early 2019 will see another significant milestone – the e-filing of the two millionth case since e-filing was first authorized in New York. In 2018, almost 130,000 users of e-filing were registered, a number that will continue to grow as attorneys and others become familiar with the ease of e-filing and its many advantages. In another major achievement, after years of experience in the trial courts, pilot e-filing programs were launched in the four Appellate Division departments beginning in the first quarter of 2018. Further expansion in the trial courts, both into new courts and within existing programs, is planned for 2019.



View the 2018 E-File Report at [www.nycourts.gov/publications/pdfs/18\\_E-File\\_Report.pdf](http://www.nycourts.gov/publications/pdfs/18_E-File_Report.pdf)

### Embracing Electronic Testing

In 2018, the UCS Division of Human Resources initiated a plan to administer its civil service examinations electronically. Transitioning to an electronic testing model will enhance and streamline the test development and test administration process. Once fully implemented, it will enable the court system to administer exams more frequently and efficiently.

During the last quarter of the year, the Division successfully piloted the Per Diem Court Interpreter examinations in the new electronic test environment. The written and oral components of the exam are now offered monthly at computerized testing centers statewide.

In 2019, the Division will administer the first large open-competitive civil service exam, the office clerical exam, using the electronic testing model. All civil service exams are expected to be administered electronically by 2021.



Chenango County Courthouse, Norwich, NY. Photo by John E. Deacon, [www.courthouses.co](http://www.courthouses.co).

- Español
- 普通话
- Русский
- العربي
- Kreyòl Ayisyen
- 广东话
- Français
- বাংলা
- ᠪᠣᠶᠢ
- Polski
- أردو
- Ελληνικά
- Shqip
- हिन्दी
- עברית
- Português
- Türkçe
- Italiano
- Tiếng Việt
- 日本語
- Ўзбек
- ਪੰਜਾਬੀ • پنجابی
- Română

# Making Courts Accessible

For the courts to be fully responsive to the needs of the people, they need to be accessible. Accessibility, however, transcends the physical structure of a court facility and includes such issues as language access and access for those with disabilities.

## Speaking the Language

The Unified Court System has long been a leader in providing interpreters for all court proceedings, at no cost to the user. Each year our courts provide interpreters for languages that range from Albanian to Yoruba, and dozens in between. In 2018 alone, we provided interpreters in 120 different languages, for more than 90,000 court appearances.



To provide the highest quality of services to court users, the court system utilizes both on-staff interpreters for more than 20 languages, and per diem (freelance) interpreters for additional languages. All interpreters undergo a rigorous testing and screening process, as well as training, including programs on specialized topics or operational needs.



Interpreter Training Program, Judicial Institute, White Plains, NY.

In 2018, in collaboration with the Office of Policy and Planning, the Office of Language Access (OLA) provided a training program on “Interpreting for Victims of Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Cases” that over 400 court interpreters attended. The interactive program included presentations from nationally recognized speakers on the dynamics of domestic violence and sexual assault, confidentiality, interpersonal safety, best practices for interpreting in domestic violence cases and vicarious trauma.

**Interpreters Working with the UCS Most Frequently Serve as Interpreters for Individuals from These Regions**



**Ensuring Access for Persons with Disabilities**

The New York Judiciary is committed to ensuring that the courts are fully accessible to persons with disabilities. Each courthouse in the State has a designated liaison who is charged with the responsibility of assisting litigants, jurors, attorneys and other court users to obtain the accommodations needed to ensure that they can meaningfully participate in the justice system.

The Advisory Committee on Access for People with Disabilities, under the leadership of Hon. Rosalyn Richter, is charged with advising the Chief Judge

and Chief Administrative Judge on a broad scope of issues to ensure best practices in providing access for court users with special needs.

The Office of Court Administration has also appointed a Statewide ADA Coordinator to provide training and policy guidance in this important area. In addition, the courts work closely with local governments, which are legally responsible for providing and maintaining facilities for the courts, to eliminate physical barriers to access to the justice system.



# Facilitating Dispute Resolution Through ADR

**M**ediation and other forms of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) can provide a quicker, more economical option to costly and protracted litigation.

*“ADR must play a greater role in the court system’s efforts to expedite cases and enhance access to justice.”*

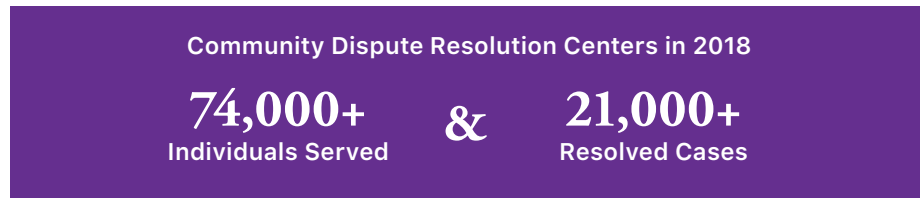
Chief Administrative Judge Marks

In 2018, the Chief Judge and Chief Administrative Judge announced a new plan to revitalize the Court System’s commitment to court-sponsored ADR while also fostering the Excellence Initiative goals of eliminating backlogs and enhancing the quality of justice.

In April, John S. Kiernan, the outgoing president of the New York City Bar Association, was named chair of a new Advisory Committee on ADR. This expert group of judges, lawyers, ADR practitioners and academics will examine the services currently accessible within the court system and make recommendations for improvement and expansion of ADR in New York.

*“Inefficiency in resolution of disputes contributes to overburdened court dockets that place enormous demands on limited judicial system resources.”*

John S. Kiernan,  
Chair, Advisory Committee on ADR



The Unified Court System provides funding to the statewide network of not-for-profit community dispute resolution centers that offer a wide range of dispute resolution services on matters referred by courts, municipal agencies, probation departments, police departments, social service providers and other entities. Approximately 1,000 trained volunteers help mediate small claims matters as well as housing, family, divorce, custody and minor criminal issues each year. During 2018:

- 74,710 individuals in 28,198 cases were served through the network of community dispute resolution centers — and 75 percent of the cases were resolved.
- The New York State Attorney/Client Fee Dispute Resolution Program resolved 826 cases.
- The Collaborative Family Law Center, which provides qualifying divorcing couples in NYC with free mediation, provided assistance to more than 3,500 families in 2018, an average of 67 families per week.



Hon. Esther M. Morgenstern presides over the Kings County Integrated Domestic Violence Court.



*“This innovative drug court model will work to save and transform lives.”*

C. Randall Hinrichs,  
Administrative Judge,  
Suffolk County

# Addressing the Needs of Society

No longer simply a forum for the resolution of disputes, the state courts have become the emergency room for a wide variety of societal ills, including homelessness, substance abuse, domestic violence, mental illness, and human trafficking.

More than two decades ago, the Unified Court System began to re-think its role and take a more proactive, rather than strictly reactive, approach. The New York Judiciary is now a national leader in utilizing innovative solutions to address underlying issues through such means as “problem-solving” courts.

## Dealing with Causes: Problem-Solving Courts

Through intensive judicial monitoring, coordination with outside services, treatment where appropriate, the removal of barriers between courts and increased communication with stakeholders, specialized courts developed under the direction of the Office of Policy and Planning (OPP), led by the Hon. Sherry Klein Heitler, have changed the way our system manages cases and responds to individuals, families and communities.

## Drug Treatment Courts

Among the earliest of the problem-solving courts were the Drug Treatment Courts, which were established to use the authority of the court to help defendants in non-violent criminal cases address the addiction that led to their criminal conduct.



Our 138 Drug Treatment Courts have served over 112,000 litigants who suffer from the disease of addiction. More than 53,000 have graduated from rigorous treatment programs and another 9,250 are current, active participants.

A specialized sub-set of the drug courts—the Family Treatment Courts—target child neglect cases in which parental substance abuse is a factor. These courts are designed to provide parents with court-supervised substance abuse treatment and an opportunity to keep their families intact.

## Opioid Crisis

Opioid Courts are rapid-response courts created in reaction to a burgeoning crisis. In 2017, the Buffalo City Court established the first specialized court to identify at arraignment those at risk of overdose, and immediately link them to medical and substance abuse treatment, followed by daily, intensive supervision by a dedicated judge. The Buffalo Opioid Treatment Intervention Court, the first of its kind in the nation, was the model for the Bronx Opioid Avoidance and Recovery Court and opioid courts in New York County Criminal Court, Kings County Supreme Court, Niagara Falls City Court, Monroe County Court, Ontario County Court, Richmond County Criminal Court, Suffolk County District Court, Syracuse City Court and Troy City Court. Additionally, 10 more opioid courts are in the planning phase statewide.



The Queens Drug Treatment Court celebrated its 20th anniversary and graduation at the Queens County Supreme Court in an event hosted by Hon. Marcia Hirsch, Presiding Judge of the Queens Treatment Court.



Judge Craig D. Hannah, founder of the nation's first opioid court.

The Court System has received a \$1.5 million grant from the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration for court-based clinician and recovery advocates. These positions will be located in up to 10 opioid courts statewide. UCS was also awarded \$932,634 for the

NYS Comprehensive Opioid Abuse Site Based Programs for opioid courts in Oswego County Court, Suffolk District Court and Kings County Criminal Court.



On July 31, 2018, the Unified Court System in partnership with the State Division of Veterans Affairs celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Veterans' Court at the State Capitol. Left to right: Hon. John Toomey (Ret.), of the Veterans Treatment Court in Suffolk County; Veterans Treatment Court founder Hon. Robert Russell of Buffalo; Hon. Sherry Klein Heitler, Chief of the UCS Office of Policy and Planning; and Frank D'Aversa, mentor coordinator with the Suffolk County Veterans' Treatment Court.

## Veterans' Treatment Courts

Many veterans suffer from service-related issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury, or struggle with mental health or substance abuse issues. Veterans' courts are presided over by judges with specialized training in the issues that face our veterans, enabling them to make appropriate referrals to treatment and community services. An important component of veterans' courts is the Veteran Mentor Program, where participants are paired with special mentors—former service members who provide support and guidance. Since Buffalo City Court Judge Robert Russell opened the nation's first Veterans Treatment Court in 2016, 31 additional veterans' courts have been opened around the state. Over 5,450 veterans have participated in Veterans' Treatment Court programs.

In November, Chief Administrative Judge Marks, New York City Criminal Court Administrative Judge Tamiko A. Amaker and Queens County Criminal Court Supervising Judge Michelle A. Johnson announced the start-up of a specialized part in Queens tailored to veterans charged with misdemeanors who may be suffering from addiction, PTSD and other combat-related disorders. The Queens Misdemeanor Veterans Treatment Court is led by Judge Scott Dunn, formerly of the U.S. Air Force, and Judge Jeffrey Gershuny, a U.S. Army veteran.

### Human Trafficking Intervention Courts

*Over 17,000 trafficking victims are brought into the United States every year from foreign countries, while thousands more are trafficked within the U.S.*



Supreme Court Justice E. Jeanette Ogden, Chair, Eighth Judicial District Gender and Racial Fairness Committee, discusses the human trafficking crisis at a conference in Buffalo.

In 2013, the Unified Court System launched a first-in-the-nation initiative to establish special courts to deal with the crisis. Now, there are 11 such courts operating statewide. These courts recognize that individuals who engage in prostitution are often coerced. The cases are handled by specially trained criminal court judges and screened by service providers to identify and assist victims of trafficking.

Legislation signed in August 2018 requires the court system to expand human trafficking courts “to the extent practicable.” The Office of Policy and Planning is considering new Human Trafficking Intervention Courts in Oneida and Orange counties and the Capital Region.

Effective counter measures to human trafficking include making law enforcement, the Judiciary and the public aware of the problem. In June, nearly 150 attorneys, judges, physicians, probation officers, treatment providers and interested citizens crowded into the Ceremonial Courtroom in the Erie County Courthouse for a three-hour presentation on human trafficking in western New York. The program, organized by the Hon. Amy C. Martoche, a Buffalo City Court Judge who runs the local Human Trafficking Intervention Hub Court, explored the problem, analyzed the law and revealed recent dynamics - including the fact that three-quarters of the victims/ survivors of human trafficking in western New York are addicted to opiates.

### Domestic Violence/ Integrated Domestic Violence Courts

The 41 Domestic Violence Courts in the state handle criminal cases in which the defendant is charged with a domestic violence-related offense. There are also three Youthful Offender Domestic Violence courts, which handle domestic violence cases among teenagers between the ages of 16 and 19.

Additionally, there are 39 Integrated Domestic Violence Courts where a single judge hears all related criminal, family and matrimonial matters in which domestic violence is an underlying issue. This results in a more informed judicial decision-making process, greater consistency in court orders, fewer court appearances for litigants and enhanced services to victims while ensuring offender accountability and compliance with orders.

One in four women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime, and 15.5 million children in the United States live in families where domestic violence was perpetrated in the past year.

### Elder Justice

*“It is the Court’s objective to ensure access to justice for New Yorkers of all backgrounds, incomes, and special needs.”*

Hon. Paula Feroletto, Eighth District Administrative Judge.



Eighth Judicial District Administrative Judge Paula Feroletto announces a collaboration with the Center for Elder Law & Justice in Chautauqua County to increase awareness of elder abuse and exploitation, and improve outcomes for older adults engaging with the courts.

By 2030, one in four New Yorkers will be 60 years or older, according to the New York State Office for the Aging. This population is particularly vulnerable to financial and physical abuse, as well as issues related to navigating court buildings and finding

transportation to proceedings. To ensure that judges are prepared to identify and address these issues, the UCS has established the NYS Judicial Committee on Elder Justice, chaired by the Hon. Deborah A. Kaplan. Additionally, the UCS promotes procedures and programs that address issues affecting older adults.

### Mental Health Courts

Since the first Mental Health Court opened in Kings County in 2002, 28 more have been established and more than 10,000 individuals have been served. The Unified Court System is actively working to open a new mental health court in Onondaga County, with the Office of Policy and Planning staff and Fifth Judicial District personnel holding planning and implementation meetings with local stakeholders. OPP is also working with the Sixth Judicial District to open a mental health court in Ithaca. Both of these areas were previously underserved.

### DWI Courts

OPP partners with the Governor’s Traffic Safety Committee to provide ongoing training to judges and court personnel to ensure timely judicial intervention, consistency of sentencing and enhanced case processing in DWI cases throughout the state—all toward the goal of enhancing public safety on the roads and highways of New York.

### Mentoring Courts

In September 2018, the first court-based mentoring program in the state, the United Against Crime-Community Action Network (U-CAN) graduated its first class in a ceremony in which former First Lady Matilda Cuomo delivered the keynote address.

U-CAN is the brainchild of Cohoes City Court Judge Andra Ackerman, a product of the foster care system who identified with the troubled teens she regularly saw in her misdemeanor court. From personal experience, Judge Ackerman knew that

a positive role model could make a transformative difference in a young person’s life, and she established the program for select misdemeanor defendants in her court. The first year’s experience—a dozen high-risk young defendants with quickly escalating criminal histories participated; only one participant was thereafter re-arrested — has prompted several other courts around the state to begin implementing the U-CAN model. Thanks to the NYS Mentoring Program, which Mrs. Cuomo created, the program operates at no cost to the court system.



Cohoes City Court Judge Andra Ackerman speaks at the first graduation of her one-of-a-kind U-CAN program. Former First Lady Matilda Cuomo, looking on, delivered the inaugural commencement address. Photo: Albany Times Union

In addition, the New York State Mentoring Program is partnering with the court system to provide mentors to children in the New York City Family Court who are aging out of the foster care system. The first semester of the program concluded in December, and planning is underway to expand it to other jurisdictions.

### Meeting the Needs of Families and Children

Families and children in crisis present a special and often critical responsibility to state government, and particularly the Judicial Branch. The Unified Court System attempts to address that need through myriad inter-related initiatives.

### Attorney for the Child Program

Under New York law, children are entitled to representation in certain Family, Supreme, Surrogate’s and appellate court matters. The

court system’s Attorney for the Child Program meets that need by funding legal representation to ensure that these children have a voice in child protective, juvenile delinquency, child custody and other matters.

In certain parts of the state, the UCS contracts with legal services agencies. In other areas, the UCS utilizes private attorneys who have been specially trained to serve as attorneys for the child.



In November, Warren County Family Court celebrated its first public observance of National Adoption Awareness Month. In this photo, Hon. Adam D. Michelini, Supervising Family Court Judge of the Fourth Judicial District, poses with an adoptive child and attorneys Rose T. Place and Karen Judd.

### Partnership for Youth Justice

The Partnership for Youth Justice is an inter-branch collaboration focused on improving outcomes for youth in the justice system. It was formed to implement the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The overarching goals of the collaboration are the improvement of public safety and the reduction of youth recidivism in the juvenile justice system. These goals span the continuum of the juvenile justice system from prevention through re-entry, with constant attention to issues of racial and ethnic disparity.

### Children’s Centers



Every day, hundreds of young children accompany caregivers to scheduled court appearances. In court, the children may be exposed to disturbing proceedings, and their presence can be a distraction from judicial business. If kept outside of the courtroom, children may endure boredom and discomfort in waiting areas.

In response, the UCS developed the nation’s first statewide system of Children’s Centers in the courts. The Centers provide a safe, cheerful, welcoming, literacy-rich environment and an opportunity for positive interventions in the lives of vulnerable children. Over 33,000 children visited the Children’s Centers in 2018.

**33,000**  
Children Visited Children Centers

**9,000**  
Referrals to Services

In addition to providing a safe haven, the Children’s Centers provide a vehicle for connecting children and families with vital services (e.g., early childhood health, educational and nutritional benefits, including food stamps) to which they and their families are entitled. Children’s Center staff made nearly 9,000 referrals to services in 2018.

### Court Appointed Special Advocates Program

*CASA volunteers donate, on average, more than 100 hours annually.*

The Court Appointed Special Advocates Assistance Program (CASA) partners with OCA to provide programmatic guidelines, fiscal support, technical assistance and training to local CASA

programs and to support Family Court’s use and development of CASA programs. The program contracts with CASA: Advocates for Children of New York State, the association representing 19 local programs throughout the state. The state CASA group assists OCA in administering the funding for programs outside New York City. OCA contracts directly to provide funding for the New York City CASA program.

CASA programs provide staff and recruit, train and supervise volunteers who are appointed by Family Courts to provide unbiased, independent information to the court in child abuse and neglect cases. Local programs serve approximately 3,000 children each year. On average, each CASA volunteer donates more than 100 hours per year to their assigned cases.

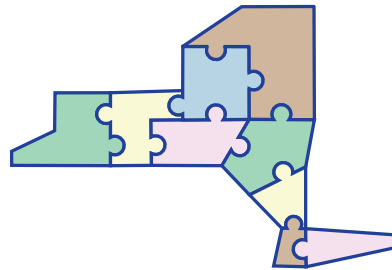
CASA volunteers may meet with the child, family members, foster parents, and service providers and review reports to compile timely and thorough information about children’s health, safety, well-being and permanency plans, and to monitor the implementation of court-ordered service and visiting plans. The volunteers work collaboratively with legal, social service and treatment providers toward the goal of securing or maintaining safe, stable, permanent homes for children in the child welfare system.



### Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children

The Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children was established in 1988 to improve the lives of children involved with the New York State courts. At first targeting primarily infants and younger children, the Commission has devoted much of its recent efforts to adolescents in the foster care and juvenile justice systems. The Commission is chaired by Judge Karen K. Peters (ret.), former Presiding Justice of the Appellate Division, Third Department.

The Commission utilizes a systemic methodology that entails convening stakeholders, conducting research, developing pilot projects, creating written materials and tools, presenting trainings and initiating efforts to change policy and practice. To learn more about the Commission, visit: [www.nycourts.gov/justiceforchildren](http://www.nycourts.gov/justiceforchildren).



### Commission on Parental Representation

Indigent parents and other specified adults in cases involving child abuse and neglect, foster care placement or termination of parental rights, have the right to assistance of court-appointed counsel. Under the Excellence Initiative, the Chief Judge appointed a Commission on Parental Representation to hold public hearings in order to propose evidence-based reforms to ensure quality, cost-effective mandated parental representation for those eligible for assigned counsel in family law cases.

*“The information and suggestions for reform to be elicited from these public hearings will prove vital in moving the Commission forward as it strives to build upon the groundwork being done across the state to improve the quality of mandated parental legal representation.”*

Chief Judge Janet DiFiore

The Commission, also led by Judge Peters, is comprised of judges, legal service providers, child welfare experts and county and state officials. Public hearings were held in Rochester, Manhattan, Albany and Mineola in September and October.



The Commission on Parental Representation held four hearings around the state to obtain information on existing services and suggestions for reform. At this hearing in Albany on Oct. 10, left to right: Michael Hein, Ulster County Executive; Hon. Theresa Whelan, Supervising Judge, Suffolk County Family Court; Judge Karen Peters (ret.), former Presiding Justice, Appellate Division, Third Department; Hon. Margaret T. Walsh, Acting Supreme Court Justice; and Sarah Rogerson, Professor and Director, Immigration Law Clinic, Albany Law School.

### Addressing the Foreclosure Crisis

Since the nationwide financial crisis of 2008 and after, the large residential foreclosure docket in New York State has been a cause of substantial concern to New York’s civic and judicial leadership. 2018 brought welcome news on that front: the pending foreclosure inventory decreased 15 percent in 2018 and has decreased 52 percent since 2016. The Judiciary has helped assist civil litigants in need of legal representation in foreclosure proceedings by allocating substantial sums across the years to support legal services organizations.

Additionally:

- Uniform motion templates were developed in cases where the homeowner has not contested the foreclosure. The templates assist litigants by ensuing uniformity of practices statewide.
- Standardized motion practices in foreclosure cases have enabled judges and court personnel to more efficiently review and process cases.
- The Administrative Board of the Courts approved a new court rule requiring the parties in both uncontested and contested divorce cases to

effectuate the transfer of any title, deed and any other relevant mortgage documents as a condition of a divorce judgment. In consequence, the person who remains in the home after a divorce is finalized will have all documents necessary to apply for a mortgage, a loan modification, or other loss mitigation option, if necessary.

### Partnering with Town and Village Courts: The Courts Closest to the People

*Under the Justice Court Assistance Program, more than 300 courts received funding to improve the delivery of justice in the local courts.*

New York State’s more than 1,200 justice courts, presided over by some 1,800 town and village justices, are rightly referred to as the “courts closest to the people.” Often, the only interaction that many members of the public will have with the court system takes place in a town or village court. Many town and village justices are not attorneys, and it is critical that all necessary steps are taken

to ensure that the level of justice provided in justice courts is consistent with that dispensed within the state’s higher courts.

The Office of Justice Court Support (OJCS) provides legal, administrative and operational support to these courts 365 days a year. In addition to creating and presenting training programs for the newly elected justices as well as those who are already sitting, attorneys at OJCS provide assistance on legal issues to the courts day and night, fielding over 20,000 inquiries annually, while the administrative staff work on available grant-initiatives associated with the local courts, as well as tracking judicial education and training compliance.



Attending a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Seneca Centralized Arraignment Part were: Hon. Craig J. Doran, Seventh Judicial District Administrative Judge; Nancy M. Sunukjian, Director of the Office of Justice Court Support; Anthony C. Rossi, Assistant Deputy Counsel, Office of the Deputy Chief Administrative Judge; and Hon. Richard A. Dollinger, Supervising Judge for Seneca County.

With a new mandatory court clerk training rule becoming effective on Jan. 1, 2019, OJCS created, finalized and recorded its clerk training programs required for newly appointed, as well as seasoned, court clerks and developed a new online learning portal which will enable the 2,000-plus court clerks statewide to access these training programs online.

Additionally, 2018 saw the expansion of several Centralized Arraignment Parts (CAP) in many of the judicial districts statewide. OJCS worked closely with the Districts on the establishment of these courts and assisted with some of the crucial data entry from the CAPs. The creation

and implementation of these CAP parts will ensure access to attorneys at each and every arraignment no matter what the hour of day or night.

### Connecting with Indian Nation Courts

Within New York’s borders, state law, federal law and tribal law all fulfill important and often overlapping roles.

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 a Federal-State-Tribal Courts Forum to investigate ways that the different justice systems could collaborate, nurture mutual understanding and foster mutual respect. The participants include judges and court personnel, child welfare workers and policymakers, traditional tribal nation officials like chiefs and clan mothers. The forum addresses problems of mutual concern, including resolving jurisdictional conflicts among the different justice systems, working together to promote efficiency and further mutual goals in law enforcement, child welfare and child support enforcement to improve justice within and among the respective systems.

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



# Achieving Excellence in Commercial Litigation: The Commercial Division

New York State is the center of finance and commerce for the entire country — and even much of the globe — and along with that world-class status comes a world-class court: The Commercial Division of the State Supreme Court.

*Proclamation:  
“...The Commercial Division is a critically important forum for addressing complex commercial disputes. Litigants all over the world look to the Commercial Division’s expertise...”*

In 1993, the Civil Branch of the New York County Supreme Court established four Commercial Parts on an experimental basis. The experiment proved successful and the Commercial and Federal Litigation Section of the New York State Bar Association recommended establishing a Commercial Division of the Supreme Court. In 1995, then Chief Judge Judith S. Kaye opened Commercial Divisions in New York and Monroe counties.

Since 1995, the Division has expanded to 10 counties throughout New York State. Its reputation and success have raised New York’s profile as an internationally respected forum for the resolution of complex commercial disputes. In addition, the Commercial Division has led the national and international trend toward creation of business courts by serving as a model for many of these new courts.



More than 100 judges from around the world, including Chief Judge DiFiore and Chief Administrative Judge Marks, gathered in lower Manhattan in September 2018 for a meeting of the Standing International Forum of Commercial Courts to share effective, efficient and creative methods for resolving commercial disputes.

On Dec. 20, 2018, the New York City Council issued a proclamation honoring the Commercial Division “for its extraordinary service to our community and national economy.”  
Photo: NYC Councilman Rory Lancman, Chief Administrative Judge Marks and Robert L. Haig, Chair of the Commercial Division Advisory Council.

The Commercial Division aspires to be the premier tribunal for resolving international commercial disputes—and that requires a continued commitment to ensure that both court procedures and court facilities are current with emerging technology. New rules addressed technology in discovery, the use of technology-assisted document review and limits on brief length. Additionally, a special docket, the “Large Complex Case List,” was created to deal with cases where a minimum of \$50 million is at issue.





*“I believe the time is ripe for another survey as the Committee looks to a new generation of attorneys for their insights, based on firsthand experiences and knowledge, to gauge the current status of gender fairness in the courts.”*

Hon. Betty Weinberg Ellerin

## Seeking Excellence Through Inclusion and Fairness

The UCS celebrates diversity and has a longstanding commitment to equal employment opportunity, the elimination of under-representation of minorities and women in the workforce, and the fair and equal treatment of everyone.

Fairness and impartiality are pillars of the legal system, but studies show that just as every person in the courthouse —judges, attorneys, non-judicial staff, jurors — brings his or her life experiences, they also bring their biases, stereotypes and preconceptions. Often, these biases are in the “hidden brain” and the individual is unaware of even harboring preconceptions that may well impact behavior and decision-making.

The Unified Court System is committed to raising awareness of these hidden biases and has encouraged programs throughout the state.

One such program took place June 13, when the Gender Fairness Committee of the Third Judicial District, the Capital District Women’s Bar Association and Albany Law School presented a continuing legal education program on implicit bias and the legal system: Not So Blind Justice: Implicit Bias and the Legal System. This program sought to raise the curtain on “behind-the-scenes” or “implicit” biases, so they can be identified and addressed in an effort to ensure that the justice system is fair and impartial.



Founded in 1988, the Latino Judges Association, Inc., was established by a group of Latino Judges determined to increase and to promote diversity on the bench. Gathering at their annual meeting in June at the New York City Bar Association were: Back row (l-r): Hon. Patria Frias-Colon; Hon. Lisa Headley; Hon. Julia Rodriguez; Hon. Armando Montano; Hon. Mary Bejarano; Hon. Joseph Zayas; Hon. Margarita Lopez Torres. Third row (l-r): Hon. Llinet Rosado; Hon. Leslie Purificacion; Hon. Diccia Pineda-Kirwan; Hon. Walter Rivera; Hon. Laura Visitacion-Lewis; Hon. Leticia Ramirez; Hon. Linda Mejias. Second row (l-r): Hon. Betsy Barros; Hon. Doris Gonzalez; Hon. Jeanette Ruiz; Hon. E. Pilar Sanchez; Hon. Norma Ruiz; Hon. Sallie Manzanet Daniels; Hon. Christopher Robles. Front row (l-r): Hon. Javier Vargas; Hon. Dora Irizarry; Hon. Fiordaliza Rodriguez; Hon. Joanne D. Quiñones (President); Hon. Wilma Guzman; Hon. Jenny Rivera; Hon. Rolando Acosta.

## The Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission

The Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission is composed of judges, attorneys and court administrators appointed by the Chief Judge to develop strategies to make the court system more responsive to the issues faced by people of color in the courts, including litigants and the larger legal community, and to implement recommendations to address those issues.



At the annual Black History Month commemoration in Manhattan, Joyce Y. Hartsfield, Executive Director of the Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission, received the Hon. Theodore T. Jones Lifetime Achievement Award. Seated from left to right: Tuskagee Airmen William Johnson and Wilfred R. DeFour; standing from left to right: Ms. Hartsfield, Chief Judge DiFiore, New York County Clerk Milton Adair Tingling and Chief Administrative Judge Marks.

In 2018, two new co-chairs of the Commission were appointed by Chief Judge DiFiore to succeed the Hon. Richard B. Lowe III, who retired—Justices Shirley Troutman of the Appellate Division, Fourth Department, and Troy K. Webber of the Appellate Division, First Department.

During its first year under the leadership of Justices Webber and Troutman, the Commission focused on diversity. It met with Administrative Judges throughout the state, reviewed statistics for each area and discussed opportunities and avenues to increase diversity. The Commission seeks to highlight and share details on effective programs in the various locations.

Additionally, the Commission made considerable progress in producing a documentary on the life and impact of its namesake, Franklin H. Williams, a key lieutenant of future Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall. Williams was a talented civil

rights attorney who successfully argued at the U.S. Supreme Court, helped organize the Peace Corps, served as ambassador to Ghana, and was instrumental in establishing the judicial commission which bears his name. The documentary will debut in early 2019.

For more information about the Commission, visit [www.nycourts.gov/ip/ethnic-fairness](http://www.nycourts.gov/ip/ethnic-fairness).

## The New York State Judicial Committee on Women in the Courts

In 1984, in response to respected academic studies that questioned whether women were being fairly and justly treated in our nation’s court systems, Chief Judge Lawrence H. Cooke established a task force to examine the courts of New York State, “identify gender bias and, if found, make recommendations for its alleviation.” When the Task Force issued its report in March 1986, it documented findings that demonstrated “the pervasiveness of gender bias in our court system with grave consequences that denied women equal justice, equal treatment and equal opportunity” and made specific recommendations for corrective action.

Led by Judge Betty Weinberg Ellerin (ret.), former Presiding Justice of the Appellate Division, First Department, the New York State Judicial Committee on Women in the Courts has worked vigorously to secure equal justice, treatment and opportunity in the courts. Twenty-four local gender bias and gender fairness committees address issues in particular geographic regions, conducting myriad public awareness and continuing legal education programs on issues as diverse as human trafficking and elder abuse.

Much has been accomplished in the 34 years since the Task Force was established. To measure these changes, assess the current status of gender fairness in the courts, and help set its agenda for the years to come, in November the Committee announced a survey of judges, attorneys and nonjudicial employees on gender fairness issues.



## The Richard C. Failla LGBTQ Commission

Chief Judge DiFiore and Chief Administrative Judge Marks first announced a new commission to highlight and address issues of concern to the LGBTQ community in late 2016. Bearing the name of a court system jurist who pioneered advocacy for LGBTQ rights throughout his career, the 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 2018:

- Proposed amendments to the various court system antidiscrimination rules (specifically, the Attorney Rules of Professional Conduct, the Rules of Judicial Conduct, the Unified Court System Code of Ethics for Nonjudicial Employees, and the Rules of the Chief Judge for Career Service) to expressly prohibit discrimination based on gender identity and gender expression were accepted by the four Departments of the Appellate Division, the Administrative Board, and the Court of Appeals.
- Presented training on antidiscrimination rule amendments at four fall nonjudicial association conferences.
- Launched a website and Twitter account and sent its first newsletter to better communicate the activities of The Failla Commission.
- Organized educational LGBTQ Pride Month events in White Plains, Albany, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Central Islip, Delhi, Syracuse, Rochester, Buffalo, Kingston, the Bronx, and Queens.



In June, the Failla Commission sponsored an event, "July 3, 1973: The Day the Court of Appeals Made Pride Possible in New York," and honored William Thom, the founder of Lambda Legal and the first openly gay judge in New York. Left to right: Matthew Skinner, Executive Director, The Richard C. Failla LGBTQ Commission; Hon. Rosalyn H. Richter, Associate Justice, Appellate Division, First Department; William J. Thom, founder of Lambda Legal; Hon. Marcy L. Kahn, Associate Justice, Appellate Division, First Department and Co-Chair, Failla Commission; Rachel B. Tiven, former CEO, Lambda Legal; Hon. Paul G. Feinman, Associate Judge, New York Court of Appeals; Hon. Deborah A. Kaplan, Administrative Judge, Civil Matters, New York County; Hon. Michael R. Sonberg, Acting Justice, Supreme Court (retired).



On Jan. 1, 2018, Justice Elizabeth A. Garry was appointed the 16th Presiding Justice of the Appellate Division, Third Department, and the first who is openly gay. Presiding Justice Garry was sworn in by former Presiding Justice Leonard A. Weiss.

In addition, the Commission's founding co-chair, the Hon. Elizabeth Garry, was appointed by Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo as Presiding Justice of the Appellate Division, Third Department, on Jan. 1. She is the first openly gay Presiding Justice of the Appellate Division in the state. Additionally, in 2018, the first openly gay judge of the Court of Claims, Hon. Chris Ann Kelley, was nominated and confirmed, and the first openly gay Surrogate, Hon. Matthew Titone, was elected in Richmond County.



CHAUMONT COUNTY COURT HOUSE

Chaumont County Courthouse, Mayville, NY. Photo by John E. Deacon, www.courthouses.co.

# Enhancing Access to Information

**T**he 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.

## 1-800-COURT-NY

1-800-COURT-NY works to improve the court system's delivery of services, by providing callers with accurate and timely information, allowing the courts to focus on their core missions and manage their workloads more efficiently. Callers provide a measurement and analysis of the court-related services that are needed and/or being delivered statewide, and the 800 number is a critical tool for disseminating time-sensitive notifications to the public, such as weather-related closures of facilities or emergency plans.

## Public Information

The Public Information Office exists to provide information about the court system to the media and those who work within the court system. It prepares and distributes press releases and media advisories about events, initiatives, judicial appointments and other newsworthy announcements while organizing press conferences and other events. All press releases are posted on the website at <http://ww2.nycourts.gov/press/index.shtml>.

## Social Media

The UCS 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. Over 35,000 followers get prompt information on emergency closings and delays through our NYCourtsNotice Twitter line. The podcast series, Amici, is available through iTunes and our Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/NewYorkCourts](http://www.facebook.com/NewYorkCourts)) is a popular site. Information on all of our social media is on our website at [ww2.nycourts.gov/social/index.shtml](http://ww2.nycourts.gov/social/index.shtml).

## Public Affairs

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. The Office is responsible for outreach to communities, schools, bar associations and others to inform New Yorkers about the courts and the resources available to assist the public. Within the UCS, the Office works to share information on programs and initiatives among our employees who work at more than 300 courthouses and other court facilities around the state.

In 2018, the Office of Public Affairs worked with Judicial Districts around the State to implement the Chief Judge's goal of informing faith leaders and the public they serve about the work of the courts. These informational Clergy Days are opportunities for judges and court staff to provide faith leaders with a basic understanding of the function of our various courts and the matters they handle, including criminal, civil, housing, matrimonial, and elder law.



Richmond County Courthouse, Staten Island, NY. Photo courtesy of Ennead Architects, [www.ennead.com](http://www.ennead.com).

# 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 - 2018**

Applications Decided [CPL 460.20(3)(b)]							2,319
Records on Appeal Filed							120
Oral Arguments							108
Appeals Decided							136
Motions Decided							1,180
Judicial Conduct Determinations Reviewed							2
<b>Dispositions of Appeals Decided in the Court of Appeals by Basis of Jurisdiction</b>							
<b>BASIS OF JURISDICTION</b>	<b>AFFIRMED</b>	<b>REVERSED</b>	<b>MODIFIED</b>	<b>DISMISSED</b>	<b>OTHER*</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	
<b>All Cases</b>							
Dissents in Appellate Division	7	7	1	0	0	15	
Permission of Court of Appeals or Judge thereof	37	21	3	0	0	61	
Permission of Appellate Division or Justice thereof	33	17	2	0	0	52	
Constitutional Question	2	0	0	0	0	2	
Stipulation for Judgment Absolute	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Other	2	0	0	0	4	6	
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>136</b>	
<b>Civil Cases</b>							
Dissents in Appellate Division	7	7	1	0	0	15	
Permission of Court of Appeals	19	9	3	0	0	31	
Permission of Appellate Division	20	10	2	0	0	32	
Constitutional Question	2	0	0	0	0	2	
Stipulation for Judgment Absolute	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Other	2	0	0	0	4	6	
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>86</b>	
<b>Criminal Cases</b>							
Permission of Court of Appeals Judge	18	12	0	0	0	30	
Permission of Appellate Division Justice	13	7	0	0	0	20	
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>50</b>	

\*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**, the State’s intermediate appellate court. The Presiding Justice and Associate Justices of each division are designated by the Governor to serve on the appellate court. All must be elected Supreme Court justices.

**Table 2: Caseload Activity in the Appellate Division - 2018**

	FIRST DEPT		SECOND DEPT		THIRD DEPT		FOURTH DEPT		TOTAL
	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal	
<b>Records on Appeal Filed</b>	<b>1,512</b>	<b>829</b>	<b>3,550</b>	<b>899</b>	<b>1,154</b>	<b>429</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>486</b>	<b>9,603</b>
Disposed of before argument or submission (e.g., dismissed, withdrawn, settled)	158	160	4,076	474	167	73	0	0	5,108
Disposed of after argument or submission:									
Affirmed	954	713	1,505	751	611	443	395	408	5,780
Reversed	246	34	566	54	102	48	132	44	1,226
Modified	207	40	242	63	107	27	101	57	844
Dismissed	193	8	384	9	105	13	201	18	931
Other	47	14	66	115	0	1	12	10	265
<b>Total Dispositions</b>	<b>1,805</b>	<b>969</b>	<b>6,839</b>	<b>1,466</b>	<b>1,092</b>	<b>605</b>	<b>841</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>14,154</b>
	FIRST DEPT		SECOND DEPT		THIRD DEPT		FOURTH DEPT		TOTAL
Oral Arguments*	1,309		2,216		642		870		5,037
Motions Decided*	4,947		10,383		6,231		5,138		26,699
Admissions to the Bar	2,626		2,267		3,311		301		8,505
Atty. Disciplinary Proceedings Decided	68		187		158		41		454

\*Not broken down by civil or criminal.

**Appellate Terms of the Supreme Court in the First and Second 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 - 2018**

	FIRST DEPT			SECOND DEPT			TOTAL
	Civil	Criminal	Total	Civil	Criminal	Total	
<b>Records on Appeal Filed</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>1,256</b>	<b>1,040</b>	<b>2,296</b>	<b>2,674</b>
Disposed of before argument or submission (e.g., dismissed, withdrawn, settled)	9	25	34	901	918	1,819	1,853
Disposed of after argument or submission:							
Affirmed	107	193	300	335	153	488	788
Reversed	35	40	75	171	47	218	293
Modified	14	2	16	58	12	70	86
Dismissed	8	1	9	18	8	26	35
Other	1	-	1	22	6	28	29
<b>Total Dispositions</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>1,505</b>	<b>1,144</b>	<b>2,649</b>	<b>3,084</b>
Oral Arguments*	296			274			570
Motions Decided*	2,020			5,535			7,555

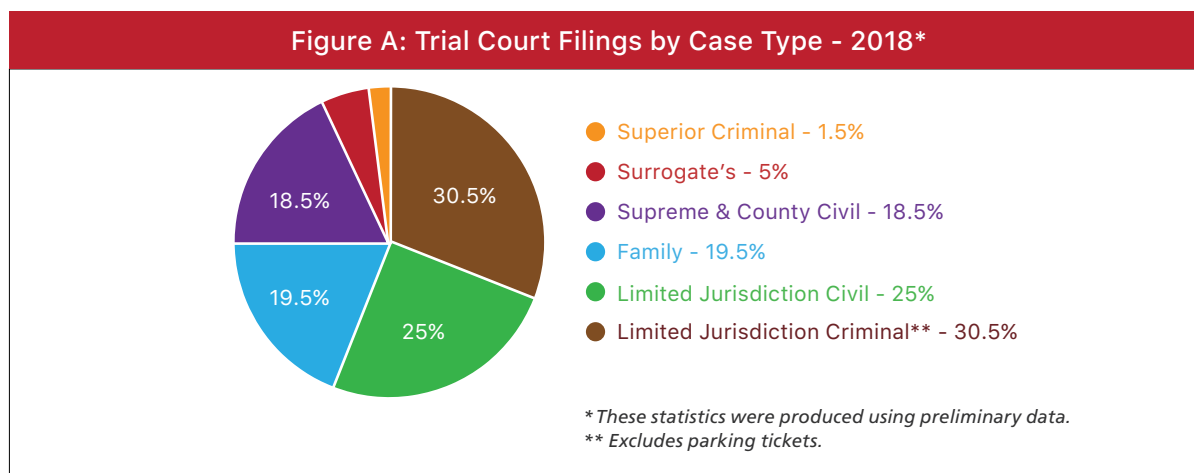
\*Not broken down by civil or criminal.

### Trial Courts

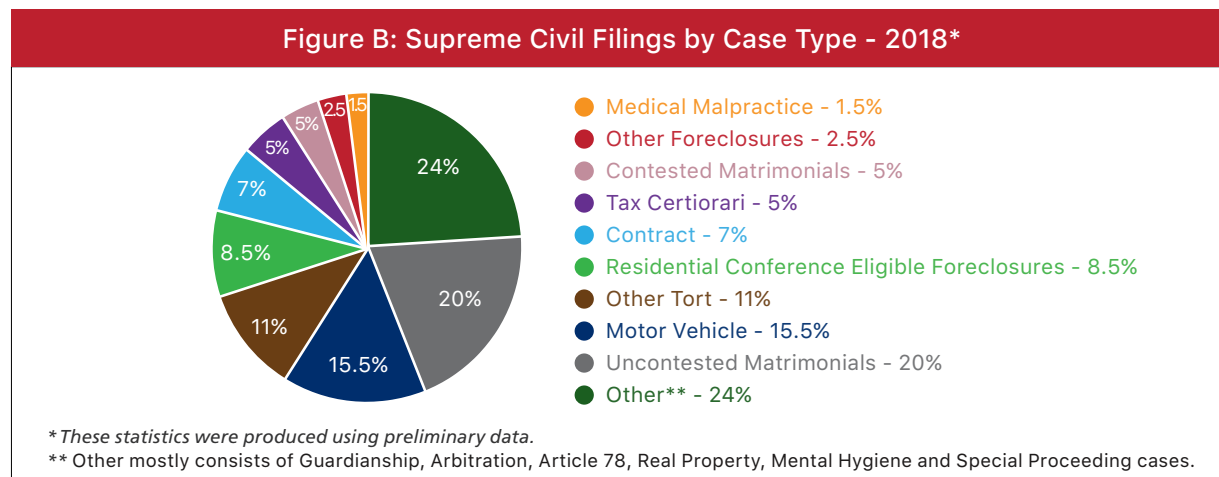
In 2018, 3,101,891 cases were filed statewide in the trial courts. Criminal cases (excluding parking tickets) accounted for 32 percent. Civil cases accounted for 44 percent. About 19 percent of the cases were in Family Court and about 5 percent were in Surrogate’s Court. Table 4 shows total filings in the trial courts over a five-year period. Figure A shows the percentage of filings by case type.

Table 4: Filings in the Trial Courts: Five-Year Comparison					
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018*
<b>Criminal</b>					
Supreme and County Courts Criminal <sup>a</sup>	47,805	45,655	46,067	44,283	43,019
Criminal Court of the City of NY <sup>b</sup>	728,811	622,730	566,145	434,045	313,929
City & District Courts Outside NYC <sup>b</sup>	648,340	642,871	637,044	631,255	592,149
Parking Tickets	115,847	100,059	108,452	104,984	93,286
<b>Criminal Total</b>	<b>1,540,803</b>	<b>1,411,315</b>	<b>1,357,708</b>	<b>1,214,567</b>	<b>1,042,383</b>
<b>Civil</b>					
Supreme Court Civil <sup>c</sup>	491,203	481,719	476,058	466,113	460,063
Civil Court of the City of NY <sup>d</sup>	547,629	528,059	507,389	529,356	549,051
City & District Courts Outside NYC <sup>d</sup>	212,804	190,177	173,574	182,450	191,675
County Courts Civil <sup>c</sup>	54,353	61,617	110,675	108,458	91,689
Court of Claims	1,817	1,894	1,794	1,816	1,766
Small Claims Assessment Review Program	54,041	55,568	46,638	44,211	40,466
<b>Civil Total</b>	<b>1,361,847</b>	<b>1,319,034</b>	<b>1,316,128</b>	<b>1,332,404</b>	<b>1,334,710</b>
<i>Family<sup>e</sup></i>	646,954	640,658	621,107	611,470	580,548
<i>Surrogate’s</i>	138,553	139,341	140,203	141,735	144,250
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,688,157</b>	<b>3,510,348</b>	<b>3,435,146</b>	<b>3,300,176</b>	<b>3,101,891</b>

<sup>a</sup> Includes felonies and misdemeanors, of which 3,100 were misdemeanor filings in 2018.  
<sup>b</sup> NYC includes arrest and summons cases; outside NYC includes arrest cases and uniform traffic tickets.  
<sup>c</sup> Includes new cases, ex parte applications and uncontested matrimonial cases.  
<sup>d</sup> Includes civil, housing, small claims and commercial claims.  
<sup>e</sup> Includes Permanency Planning Hearings held.  
 \* These statistics were produced using preliminary data.



The Supreme Court 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. Supreme Court Civil Cases During 2018, there were 460,063 civil filings in Supreme Court, including 174,628 new cases, 241,687 ex parte applications and 43,748 uncontested matrimonial cases. A total of 489,169 matters reached disposition. Figure C shows the breakdown of cases by manner of disposition.



**Table 5: Supreme Civil Cases - 2018\***

Location	FILINGS		DISPOSITIONS				
	New Cases	Note of Issue	Total	Pre-Note	Note of Issue	Settlements	Verdicts
<b>Total State</b>	<b>174,628</b>	<b>53,908</b>	<b>199,806</b>	<b>148,470</b>	<b>51,336</b>	<b>55,371</b>	<b>4,514</b>
NYC	80,612	30,147	89,874	62,952	26,922	27,812	2,926
New York	15,909	3,760	18,355	12,997	5,358	8,641	462
Bronx	23,312	12,962	23,650	16,000	7,650	7,640	980
Kings	18,442	4,189	23,140	18,497	4,643	3,853	391
Queens	19,366	8,185	21,327	12,838	8,489	6,508	979
Richmond	3,583	1,051	3,402	2,620	782	1,170	114
ONYC	94,016	23,761	109,932	85,518	24,414	27,559	1,588
Albany	3,429	479	3,743	3,124	619	436	7
Allegany	169	31	215	177	38	24	3
Broome	1,111	216	1,304	1,072	232	78	2
Cattaraugus	361	29	392	375	17	103	0
Cayuga	524	52	664	569	95	11	1
Chautauqua	500	84	755	636	119	89	4
Chemung	512	71	540	441	99	12	2
Chenango	195	47	263	214	49	12	0
Clinton	412	84	507	428	79	141	4
Columbia	350	77	485	381	104	88	1
Cortland	166	36	187	145	42	10	0
Delaware	289	51	377	300	77	8	2
Dutchess	2,741	640	3,137	2,458	679	1,328	35
Erie	7,395	913	9,276	8,306	970	1,853	53
Essex	200	40	268	217	51	55	0
Franklin	279	76	355	282	73	132	1
Fulton	391	54	519	446	73	163	2
Genesee	241	37	292	253	39	73	0
Greene	335	63	474	388	86	78	0
Herkimer	315	65	402	329	73	10	0

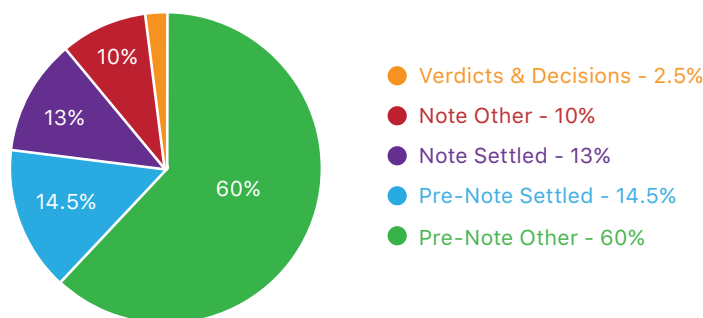
\*These statistics were produced using preliminary data.

Table 5: Supreme Civil Cases - 2018\*

Location	FILINGS		DISPOSITIONS				
	New Cases	Note of Issue	Total	Pre-Note	Note of Issue	Settlements	Verdicts
<b>Total State</b>	<b>174,628</b>	<b>53,908</b>	<b>199,806</b>	<b>148,470</b>	<b>51,336</b>	<b>55,371</b>	<b>4,514</b>
Jefferson	497	162	590	412	178	177	10
Lewis	88	19	125	97	28	22	1
Livingston	462	42	489	454	35	16	0
Madison	220	90	259	196	63	9	1
Monroe	5,266	669	6,032	5,143	889	464	24
Montgomery	324	43	409	380	29	125	1
Nassau	17,045	6,890	17,047	11,051	5,996	7,089	512
Niagara	1,216	164	1,430	1,290	140	541	13
Oneida	2,238	403	2,256	1,879	377	234	193
Onondaga	3,053	854	3,087	2,303	784	390	24
Ontario	446	98	527	419	108	112	2
Orange	3,762	1,051	4,059	3,035	1,024	1,601	59
Orleans	243	7	287	271	16	60	0
Oswego	527	121	484	378	106	59	86
Otsego	330	62	343	305	38	18	0
Putnam	706	172	826	677	149	99	27
Rensselaer	1,056	102	1,108	946	162	122	9
Rockland	3,079	768	3,662	2,956	706	777	31
St. Lawrence	549	119	588	462	126	128	4
Saratoga	1,208	313	1,494	1,159	335	612	24
Schenectady	990	178	1,442	1,203	239	437	15
Schoharie	111	16	139	98	41	11	2
Schuyler	66	16	86	66	20	0	0
Seneca	392	34	440	399	41	10	0
Steuben	668	61	906	820	86	52	1
Suffolk	16,128	3,654	19,041	15,818	3,223	6,910	274
Sullivan	711	128	1,149	1,021	128	83	7
Tioga	203	46	240	184	56	11	0
Tompkins	253	83	245	157	88	32	16
Ulster	1,526	462	1,931	1,481	450	524	19
Warren	455	100	655	525	130	184	5
Washington	418	59	532	451	81	109	1
Wayne	771	74	787	708	79	22	0
Westchester	8,663	3,510	12,607	7,818	4,789	1,763	110
Wyoming	297	36	317	288	29	48	0
Yates	134	10	158	127	31	4	0

\*These statistics were produced using preliminary data.

Figure C: Supreme Civil Disposition by Type of Disposition - 2018\*



\*These statistics were produced using preliminary data.

**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, generally involving claims up to \$25,000. County Courts in the Third and Fourth Departments, while primarily trial courts, 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 2018\***

Location	FILINGS			DISPOSITIONS						
	Total	Indictments	SCI's**	Total	Guilty Pleas	Convictions	Acquittals	Nonjury Verdicts	Dismissals	Other
<b>Total State</b>	<b>39,919</b>	<b>25,343</b>	<b>14,576</b>	<b>42,491</b>	<b>36,840</b>	<b>954</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>2,960</b>	<b>1,172</b>
NYC	16,921	12,783	4,138	18,180	14,875	523	219	75	1,743	745
New York	5,619	4,704	915	5,655	4,454	237	81	21	618	244
Bronx	3,194	2,849	345	3,738	2,912	54	57	8	559	148
Kings	4,476	3,104	1,372	5,067	4,348	95	30	17	350	227
Queens	2,839	1,584	1,255	2,982	2,529	125	50	28	156	94
Richmond	793	542	251	738	632	12	1	1	60	32
ONYC	22,998	12,560	10,438	24,311	21,965	431	122	149	1,217	427
Albany	840	424	416	976	860	24	13	2	52	25
Allegany	88	21	67	93	84	2	0	0	6	1
Broome	564	255	309	556	518	8	2	1	25	2
Cattaraugus	316	198	118	290	276	4	2	0	7	1
Cayuga	132	72	60	136	132	2	0	0	2	0
Chautauqua	217	82	135	309	289	2	0	0	16	2
Chemung	342	328	14	291	230	13	7	18	15	8
Chenango	146	120	26	157	145	2	0	1	3	6
Clinton	329	159	170	294	277	5	0	2	5	5
Columbia	146	43	103	154	142	2	0	1	6	3
Cortland	157	59	98	158	140	3	3	1	4	7
Delaware	93	38	55	98	93	0	1	0	2	2
Dutchess	380	165	215	372	342	9	1	0	18	2
Erie	1,612	642	970	1,680	1,553	23	3	29	49	23
Essex	72	46	26	61	57	3	0	0	0	1
Franklin	92	59	33	90	87	1	0	0	0	2
Fulton	172	52	120	172	162	6	0	0	2	2
Genesee	224	127	97	250	225	8	0	2	9	6
Greene	132	48	84	150	138	0	0	0	5	7
Hamilton	9	5	4	7	6	0	0	0	0	1
Herkimer	90	28	62	134	131	0	0	0	3	0
Jefferson	537	173	364	555	540	4	0	2	9	0
Lewis	115	37	78	125	107	0	0	0	12	6
Livingston	225	113	112	217	200	6	1	0	0	10
Madison	221	71	150	188	173	6	2	0	2	5
Monroe	1,599	1,205	394	1,822	1,507	58	24	40	169	24
Montgomery	175	81	94	165	154	3	3	0	0	5

\*These statistics were produced using preliminary data.

\*\*Superior Court Information

**Table 6: Supreme Criminal & County Court - Felony Cases 2018\***

Location	FILINGS			DISPOSITIONS						
	Total	Indictments	SCI's**	Total	Guilty Pleas	Convictions	Acquittals	Nonjury Verdicts	Dismissals	Other
<b>Total State</b>	<b>39,919</b>	<b>25,343</b>	<b>14,576</b>	<b>42,491</b>	<b>36,840</b>	<b>954</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>2,960</b>	<b>1,172</b>
Nassau	2,140	971	1,169	2,205	1,971	50	10	4	155	15
Niagara	341	157	184	386	355	3	0	0	14	14
Oneida	597	389	208	641	611	11	1	0	5	13
Onondaga	1,164	744	420	1,255	1,095	35	10	0	111	4
Ontario	414	164	250	431	400	13	3	0	12	3
Orange	891	614	277	894	829	7	1	2	31	24
Orleans	86	70	16	106	102	2	0	0	0	2
Oswego	210	109	101	233	224	1	1	0	6	1
Otsego	86	69	17	92	82	6	2	0	2	0
Putnam	80	34	46	83	77	5	0	0	1	0
Rensselaer	388	258	130	358	318	3	4	1	31	1
Rockland	472	323	149	468	408	6	2	10	32	10
St. Lawrence	241	131	110	254	219	3	2	0	23	7
Saratoga	383	96	287	369	359	6	0	0	2	2
Schenectady	386	235	151	455	418	14	4	0	7	12
Schoharie	42	17	25	40	36	2	1	0	1	0
Schuyler	82	42	40	72	69	0	0	1	0	2
Seneca	115	34	81	136	115	5	0	1	13	2
Steuben	539	444	95	467	368	1	1	19	28	50
Suffolk	2,395	1,641	754	2,775	2,400	30	7	4	246	88
Sullivan	260	99	161	228	224	1	0	1	1	1
Tioga	118	73	45	108	103	2	0	3	0	0
Tompkins	151	72	79	175	153	2	2	1	12	5
Ulster	271	177	94	325	304	7	2	0	10	2
Warren	265	83	182	281	276	1	1	0	3	0
Washington	200	154	46	201	189	2	3	0	6	1
Wayne	164	118	46	185	162	1	1	2	16	3
Westchester	1,195	409	786	1,262	1,223	15	2	0	18	4
Wyoming	219	129	90	258	250	1	0	1	5	1
Yates	78	53	25	68	57	2	0	0	5	4

\*These statistics were produced using preliminary data.

\*\*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 2018, 1,766 claims were filed and 2,094 were decided.

**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 2018 filings and dispositions by case type.

**Table 7: Surrogate's Court Filings & Dispositions: Proceedings by Case Type - 2018\***

Case Type	TOTAL STATE		NYC		OUTSIDE NYC	
	Filings	Dispositions**	Filings	Dispositions**	Filings	Dispositions**
<b>Total</b>	<b>144,250</b>	<b>117,773</b>	<b>36,941</b>	<b>34,868</b>	<b>107,309</b>	<b>82,905</b>
Probate	41,102	43,625	11,229	11,415	29,873	32,210
Administration	18,622	21,155	7,992	8,142	10,630	13,013
Voluntary Admin.	26,612	26,612	7,632	7,632	18,980	18,980
Accounting	28,756	4,923	3,409	1,690	25,347	3,233
Inter Vivos Trust	1,437	1,268	161	236	1,276	1,032
Miscellaneous	8,934	9,411	2,663	3,340	6,271	6,071
Guardianship	17,779	9,055	3,668	2,204	14,111	6,851
Adoption	983	1,696	185	204	798	1,492
Estate Tax	25	28	2	5	23	23

\*These statistics were produced using preliminary data.

\*\*Includes orders and decrees signed.

**Family Court**, located in every county of the State, 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 - 2018**

Type of Petition	TOTAL STATE		NYC		OUTSIDE NYC	
	Filings	Dispositions	Filings	Dispositions	Filings	Dispositions
<b>Total</b>	<b>580,548</b>	<b>589,470</b>	<b>195,883</b>	<b>194,105</b>	<b>384,665</b>	<b>395,365</b>
Termination of Parental Rights	3,181	3,239	835	872	2,346	2,367
Surrender of Child	2,273	2,236	454	458	1,819	1,778
Child Protective (Neglect & Abuse)	42,232	42,164	14,942	15,425	27,290	26,739
Juvenile Delinquency	6,980	7,017	2,291	2,358	4,689	4,659
Designated Felony	232	139	95	31	137	108
Persons in Need of Supervision	3,052	3,250	557	617	2,495	2,633
Adoption	2,669	2,737	1,045	1,029	1,624	1,708
Adoption Certification	151	150	48	45	103	105
Guardianship	9,103	10,350	3,534	3,851	5,569	6,499
Custody/Visitation	188,736	188,794	54,385	53,369	134,351	135,425
Foster Care Review	80	71	42	37	38	34
Foster Care Placement	494	425	267	217	227	208
Family Offense	60,463	59,668	24,370	23,901	36,093	35,767
Paternity	23,058	23,476	10,398	10,236	12,660	13,240
Support	195,628	203,235	61,262	60,286	134,366	142,949
Uniform Interstate Family Support Act	7,168	7,503	3,443	3,483	3,725	4,020
Consent to Marry	36	37	23	22	13	15
Other	589	556	137	113	452	443
Permanency Planning Hearings Held	34,423	34,423	17,755	17,755	16,668	16,668

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 for landlord-tenant proceedings. New York City Civil Court Judges are elected to ten year terms; housing judges are appointed by the Chief Administrative Judge 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 - 2018								
	CIVIL ACTIONS*		HOUSING		SMALL CLAIMS*		COMMERCIAL CLAIMS*	
	Filing <sup>a</sup>	Dispositions <sup>b</sup>	Filing <sup>a</sup>	Dispositions <sup>b</sup>	Filing	Dispositions	Filing	Dispositions
<b>New York City</b>	280,916	208,347	244,015	218,570	18,992	23,983	5,128	5,927
New York	43,125	36,266	50,255	40,803	4,413	4,881	1,256	1,311
Bronx	38,785	34,234	84,752	75,809	3,245	3,694	657	784
Kings	114,122	79,066	67,877	64,061	5,273	6,148	1,186	1,288
Queens	65,719	35,312	35,595	33,311	5,046	8,198	1,452	1,876
Richmond	19,165	23,469	5,536	4,586	1,015	1,062	577	668

<sup>a</sup> Includes both answered and unanswered cases.

<sup>b</sup> Includes courtroom dispositions and default judgments.

\*These statistics were produced using preliminary data.

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 ten year terms. During 2018, 78 percent of the arrests were misdemeanors, with 46 percent of all cases reaching disposition by plea. Another 44.5 percent were dismissed; 5 percent were sent to the grand jury; 2.5 percent were disposed of by other means; and 2 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 - 2018				
	ARREST CASES		SUMMONS CASES*	
	Filings	Dispositions	Filings**	Dispositions
<b>New York City</b>	<b>205,649</b>	<b>210,980</b>	<b>108,280</b>	<b>127,639</b>
New York	53,519	55,932	33,458	35,954
Bronx	41,587	42,195	25,615	29,398
Kings	58,788	59,407	22,767	31,810
Queens	43,325	44,427	20,005	23,936
Richmond	8,430	9,019	6,435	6,541

\*These statistics were produced using preliminary data.

\*\*Includes both answered and unanswered cases.

**City Courts Outside New York City** arraign felonies and handle misdemeanors and lesser offenses as well as civil lawsuits involving claims up to \$15,000. Some City Courts 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 2018, there were a total of 877,110 filings and 893,346 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 - 2018\*

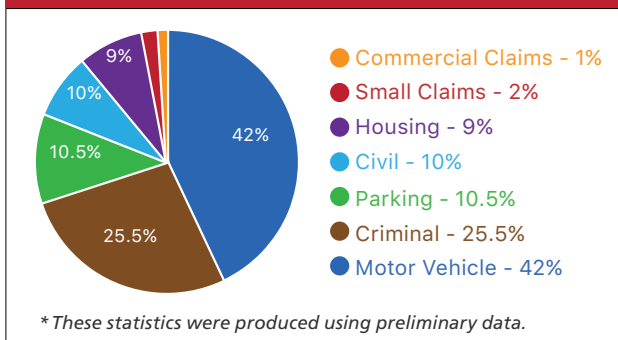


Table 11: City and District Courts: Filings by Case Type - 2018\* Total Filings: 877,110

Location	Criminal	MV	Parking	Civil	Small Claims	L&T	Commercial
<b>Total</b>	<b>223,120</b>	<b>369,029</b>	<b>93,286</b>	<b>86,492</b>	<b>17,909</b>	<b>80,529</b>	<b>6,745</b>
Albany	5,213	18,623	9	2,156	468	5,174	90
Amsterdam	972	2,963	57	370	113	225	27
Auburn	1,187	2,127	301	598	167	766	41
Batavia	828	1,520	50	237	92	170	37
Beacon	618	2,829	493	195	42	131	22
Binghamton	3,960	6,853	411	1,238	353	1,443	81
Buffalo	16,749	9,729	73	4,345	1,731	9,445	614
Canandaigua	631	3,166	20	272	88	95	16
Cohoes	847	2,696	2	179	72	447	6
Corning	638	1,607	33	721	66	80	27
Cortland	1,637	2,966	121	376	99	356	30
Dunkirk	631	910	6	152	72	108	34
Elmira	1,803	2,458	1	501	109	650	47
Fulton	843	1,789	0	315	76	212	56
Geneva	553	2,476	6	137	29	141	4
Glen Cove	1,162	4,057	3,324	16	46	241	13
Glens Falls	1,044	2,104	168	504	80	148	84
Gloversville	1,331	1,684	36	464	109	348	31
Hornell	476	1,153	0	137	33	68	13
Hudson	684	1,917	0	133	49	105	66
Ithaca	2,085	3,451	23	187	125	155	26
Jamestown	3,398	3,645	640	468	184	553	147
Johnstown	549	544	4	165	37	66	10
Kingston	1,312	3,234	7	922	180	684	62
Lackawanna	962	5,667	4	367	146	1,374	38
Little Falls	204	571	0	186	73	28	19
Lockport	1,415	2,890	104	900	196	276	61

\*These statistics were produced using preliminary data.

Table 11: City and District Courts: Filings by Case Type - 2018*							Total Filings: 877,110
Location	Criminal	MV	Parking	Civil	Small Claims	L&T	Commercial
<b>Total</b>	<b>223,120</b>	<b>369,029</b>	<b>93,286</b>	<b>86,492</b>	<b>17,909</b>	<b>80,529</b>	<b>6,745</b>
Long Beach	1,703	2,528	8,449	15	45	148	3
Mechanicville	603	1,112	5	188	57	95	99
Middletown	2,424	4,814	139	688	170	454	59
Mount Vernon	3,460	6,881	0	604	207	2,792	35
New Rochelle	2,316	7,804	65,993	1,678	457	1,127	53
Newburgh	3,252	5,658	31	504	183	833	35
Niagara Falls	3,384	7,523	1,581	942	160	1,358	23
North Tonawanda	939	5,317	0	304	102	164	46
Norwich	537	982	37	324	60	74	57
Ogdensburg	697	787	1	189	88	93	68
Olean	883	2,096	26	180	123	151	43
Oneida	948	2,032	94	679	58	140	24
Oneonta	664	1,065	143	227	101	65	22
Oswego	1,421	2,426	0	394	125	176	21
Peekskill	1,311	4,558	31	161	57	304	12
Plattsburgh	997	2,053	5	218	104	177	60
Port Jervis	1,403	2,630	15	162	43	173	10
Poughkeepsie	2,180	3,830	1,493	596	283	1,769	70
Rensselaer	242	671	4	275	51	134	39
Rochester	10,891	6,722	33	2,443	1,614	8,735	376
Rome	2,338	8,129	13	759	142	468	16
Rye	321	4,938	1	29	60	25	30
Salamanca	618	1,225	11	77	50	74	20
Saratoga Springs	1,811	4,672	563	277	161	155	86
Schenectady	3,890	7,425	40	802	401	3,398	62
Sherrill	46	178	0	69	11	8	7
Syracuse	12,713	23,179	42	3,704	751	4,490	156
Tonawanda	748	5,459	58	312	109	84	83
Troy	2,362	9,488	15	1,145	195	4,227	32
Utica	5,562	10,606	2	1,183	262	1,336	165
Watertown	1,602	1,803	2	654	145	440	63
Watervliet	646	4,330	2	296	64	306	0
White Plains	2,579	14,069	5,548	164	279	725	80
Yonkers	8,069	13,760	122	1,075	451	5,884	217
Nassau District	31,408	39,576	212	19,474	2,883	7,119	1,500
Suffolk District	56,420	55,074	2,682	29,460	3,022	9,339	1,371

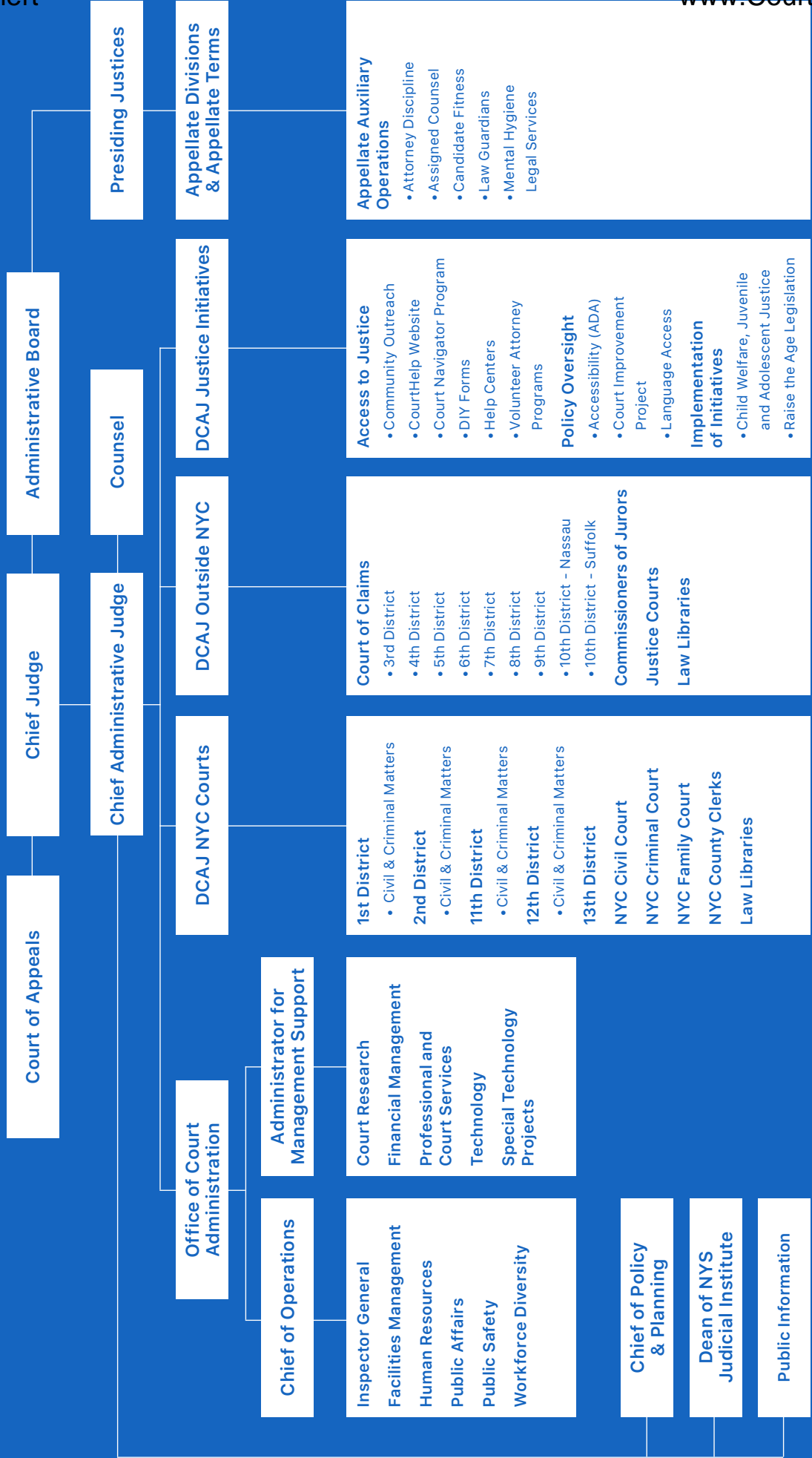
\*These statistics were produced using preliminary data.

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 of 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 approximately 1,275 Justice Courts and 2,200 Town and Village Justices.



# NEW YORK STATE Unified Court System

# Administrative Structure



Court of Appeals

Chief Judge

Administrative Board

Chief Administrative Judge

Counsel

Presiding Justices

Office of Court Administration

Chief of Operations

Administrator for Management Support

Inspector General  
Facilities Management  
Human Resources  
Public Affairs  
Public Safety  
Workforce Diversity

Court Research  
Financial Management  
Professional and Court Services  
Technology  
Special Technology Projects

DCAJ NYC Courts

DCAJ Outside NYC

DCAJ Justice Initiatives

**1st District**  
• Civil & Criminal Matters  
**2nd District**  
• Civil & Criminal Matters  
**11th District**  
• Civil & Criminal Matters  
**12th District**  
• Civil & Criminal Matters  
**13th District**  
• Civil & Criminal Matters  
NYC Civil Court  
NYC Criminal Court  
NYC Family Court  
NYC County Clerks  
Law Libraries

**Court of Claims**  
• 3rd District  
• 4th District  
• 5th District  
• 6th District  
• 7th District  
• 8th District  
• 9th District  
• 10th District - Nassau  
• 10th District - Suffolk  
**Commissioners of Jurors**  
**Justice Courts**  
**Law Libraries**

**Access to Justice**  
• Community Outreach  
• CourtHelp Website  
• Court Navigator Program  
• DIY Forms  
• Help Centers  
• Volunteer Attorney Programs  
**Policy Oversight**  
• Accessibility (ADA)  
• Court Improvement Project  
• Language Access  
**Implementation of Initiatives**  
• Child Welfare, Juvenile and Adolescent Justice  
• Raise the Age Legislation

**Appellate Auxiliary Operations**  
• Attorney Discipline  
• Assigned Counsel  
• Candidate Fitness  
• Law Guardians  
• Mental Hygiene Legal Services

Chief of Policy & Planning

Dean of NYS Judicial Institute

Public Information

# Office of Court Administration

**T**he 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 comprises the following divisions:

- **Division of Financial Management** prepares the Judiciary budget and formulates and implements fiscal policies.
- **Division of Human Resources** is responsible for personnel and benefits administration and providing education and training programs to the non-judicial 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 Disabilities Act.
- **Division of Technology** 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** facilitates public information programs.
- **Counsel’s Office** provides legal advice to court administrators; prepares and analyzes legislation; and represents the Unified Court System in litigation.
- **Department of Public Safety** is responsible for developing and implementing uniform policies and procedures to ensure the safety and accessibility of state courthouses.
- **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.
- **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 Workforce Diversity** promotes and supports diversity in hiring and promotion in the court system’s workforce and advances practices that ensure a bias-free work place.
- **Office of Special Projects and Technology** develops and implements statewide technology initiatives.
- **Office of Court Research** provides caseload activity statistics, jury system support and operations research to all UCS courts.
- **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.

# 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 billion were approved by the Legislature for the State Judiciary for the 2018-2019 fiscal year.

The court system collects substantial revenue through fines, fees and other means. In 2018, fines and fees totaled \$642,390,476, a figure which includes all state, county and city remedies, but does not include bail or other trusts.

## Criminal History Search Revenues

A portion of court system-collected revenue includes fees for services provided by 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 \$65 fee per name and date of birth searched.

The revenue generated from each search request is allocated as follows:

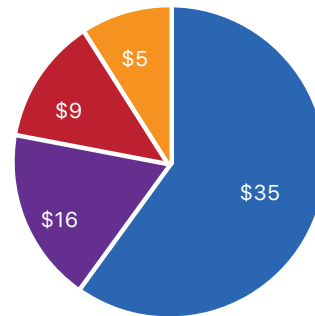
- \$35 to the Indigent Legal Services Fund
- \$16 to the Office of Court Administration's Judiciary Data Processing Offset Fund
- \$9 to the Legal Services Fund
- \$5 to the General Fund.

In 2018, the Criminal History Search Unit collected \$195,245,700 for criminal history search records.

**\$642,000,000**  
Total Fines and Fees Collected in 2018

**\$195,000,000**  
Criminal History Search Fees

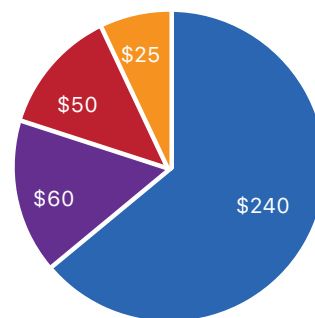
### \$65 Criminal Search History Fee Breakdown



- General Fund
- Legal Services Fund
- Judiciary Data Processing Offset Fund
- Indigent Legal Services Fund

**\$54,400,000**  
Attorney Registration Fees

### \$375 Attorney Registration Fee Breakdown



- Legal Services Assistance Fund
- Indigent Legal Services
- Lawyer's Fund for Client Protection
- Attorney Licensing Fund



Courtroom of the Appellate Division, First Department in Manhattan.

### 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 Funds.

In 2018, the UCS collected \$54.4 million in attorney registration fees.

### Grants and Contracts

The grants and contracts unit supports both the development of grant proposals and the implementation of grant-funded programs. The office conducts procurement and contracting activities and accounts payable functions for all grant funds and supports the preparation and submission of programmatic and fiscal reports to

fundors. Centralizing these functions reduces the burden on local judicial administrative offices so they can focus on project implementation.

During 2018, the Unified Court System was awarded an unprecedented amount of federal funding, much of it focused on enhancing the capacity of the courts to respond to the opioid crisis.

The UCS received nine awards from the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, including three major statewide grants:

- A grant through the federal “Comprehensive Opioid Abuse Program” to support technology-assisted and teleservices to improve access to treatment for offenders in rural communities
- A grant to pilot and validate the Criminal Court Assessment Tool in drug courts throughout the state
- A grant to replicate and adapt the groundbreaking and highly promising Buffalo Opioid Intervention model in additional counties.

In addition, New York County Supreme Court was awarded a grant to implement an Alternative to Incarceration (ATI) Court. The Manhattan ATI Court will offer offenders with both mental health and substance use disorders the opportunity to remain in the community, with appropriate support and court monitoring.

# Measures Enacted into Law in 2018

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 2018 legislative session, Counsel's Office, with the assistance of the Chief Administrative Judge's advisory committees, prepared and submitted 101 measures for legislative consideration. Ultimately, nine were enacted into law. Also during the 2018 session, Counsel's Office furnished Counsel to the Governor with analyses and recommendations on 19 measures awaiting executive action.

- **Chapter 51** (Senate 7501/Assembly 9501). Enacts the 2018-19 Judiciary Budget. Eff. 4/1/18.
- **Chapter 71** (Senate 7440-A/Assembly 8948-A). Implements two collective bargaining agreements between the State and two public employee unions negotiating on behalf of court employees in the New York City senior court officers and New York City court officers negotiating units. These collective bargaining agreements provide salary increases and other benefits for the period from April 1, 2011 through April 1, 2020. Eff. 6/1/18 [and deemed to have been in full force and effect on and after 4/1/2017].
- **Chapter 72** (Senate 7715/Assembly 9665). Implements a collective bargaining agreement between the State and a public employee union negotiating on behalf of court employees in the New York City court clerks negotiating unit. This collective bargaining agreement provides salary increases and other benefits for the period from April 1, 2011 through April 1, 2020.
- **Chapter 168** (Senate 8416/Assembly 10647). Amends chapter 237 of the Laws of 2015 to extend, until September 1, 2019, authorization for the Chief Administrative Judge to mandate e-filing in certain cases involving residential foreclosure or consumer debt. Eff. 7/31/2018.
- **Chapter 161** (Senate 8324/Assembly 10365). Amends chapter 363 of the Laws of 2010, which extends expiration of provisions of the Judiciary Law authorizing referees to determine applications for orders of protection while Family Court is in session. Eff. 7/31/2018.
- **Chapter 218** (Senate 4867/Assembly 6047). Amends the CPLR to provide for the service of a subpoena and delivery of records. Eff. 8/24/18.
- **Chapter 219** (Senate 4869/Assembly 6048). Amends the CPLR in relation to the authenticating effect of a party's production of material authored or otherwise created by a party. Eff. 1/1/19.
- **Chapter 231** (Senate 6538/Assembly 8177). Amends the Uniform Justice Court Act in relation to justices presiding in an off-hours arraignment part. Eff. 8/24/18.
- **Chapter 362** (Senate 5714/Assembly 7557). Amends the Family Court Act in relation to truancy allegations in persons in need of supervision and child protective proceedings in Family Court. Eff. 3/7/19.



New York County Surrogate's Court in Manhattan.



**NYCOURTS.GOV**