

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

THE CHIEF JUDGE'S 2020 HEARING ON CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES IN NEW YORK



Monday, September 21, 2020
1:00 PM – 5:00 PM



Live Stream:
<http://nycourts.gov/ctapps/civil.html>

The Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals and the State of New York, Janet DiFiore, announces a statewide public hearing to evaluate the continuing unmet civil legal needs of low-income New Yorkers. This year's hearing will focus on the significance of accessible, publicly funded civil legal services in confronting the civil justice crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Chief Judge will report to the Legislature, as requested in its June 2010 Joint Resolution, on the information obtained at the hearing and on the continuing work of the New York State Permanent Commission on Access to Justice.

The Chief Judge will be joined on the hearing panel by the four Presiding Justices of the Appellate Division: Hon. Rolando T. Acosta (First Department), Hon. Alan D. Scheinkman (Second Department), Hon. Elizabeth A. Garry (Third Department), and Hon. Gerald J. Whalen (Fourth Department), as well as the Chief Administrative Judge, Hon. Lawrence K. Marks, and the President of the New York State Bar Association, Scott M. Karson.

About this Hearing:

The 2020 pandemic has affected, and will continue to affect, the civil justice system and those it serves, particularly people of color, low-income New Yorkers and other vulnerable communities. The pandemic's adverse public health and financial consequences have severely impacted these communities and their ability to access and safeguard the essentials of life, such as housing, family stability and personal safety in domestic relations, healthcare, education, or subsistence income and public benefits. This year's Public Hearing seeks information from interested and knowledgeable individuals, organizations, and other entities about recent, present and future responses to the current crisis.

Topics may include:

- The critical role that Judiciary Civil Legal Services (JCLS) funding has played in enabling providers to respond quickly to the unexpected needs resulting from the health crisis.
- The additional economic costs to providers to deliver services through this crisis, including expenses necessary to adapt to a remote work environment and comply with public health safety guidelines.
- The magnitude of the anticipated future need for civil legal services by low-income New Yorkers affected by the pandemic.
- The short- and long-term economic, social, and public health consequences of insufficient civil legal services upon communities and individuals, including persons with disabilities, the elderly, veterans, and children.
- The increased importance of civil legal services in Black and Brown communities that have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 as a result of systemic racism.
- The potential for addressing the increased demand for legal services resulting from the ongoing health crisis through:
 - Identification of the most effective responses by legal services providers.
 - Exploration of the successful use of new and expanded technology by the court system, the providers, and other stakeholders to assure access to justice.
 - Availability of increased pro bono services, law school programs, law student involvement, non-lawyer programs, and other collaborations in serving communities in need.
- The economic benefits to individuals, communities, the courts, and the State from the provision of civil legal services where essentials of life are at stake.

The Chief Judge's Hearing Panel will consider both oral statements (by invitation only) and written submissions. If you are interested in being invited to present, please send an email no later than August 21, 2020 and (1) identify the presenter and their affiliation; and (2) attach a prepared statement or detailed outline of the proposed statement, specifying which of the topics described above will be addressed. Proposed statements should be no more than 10 minutes in length. Those interested in providing only a written submission may email their remarks no later than September 10, 2020. For persons not invited to present oral remarks, your proposed statement will be deemed a written submission. The New York State Permanent Commission on Access to Justice is assisting the Chief Judge in preparing for the hearing and reporting on its results.

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