



PRESS RELEASE

New York State
Unified Court System

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**Chief Judge DiFiore and Mayor de Blasio Announce
Opening of New Summons Court in Lower Manhattan**
*\$20 Million Investment in Streamlined Architectural Design Part of Larger
Effort to Improve Quality of Justice in City's Summons Process*

New York – Chief Judge Janet DiFiore and Mayor Bill de Blasio today announced the opening of a state-of-the-art court facility in lower Manhattan that will handle Criminal Court summonses issued in Manhattan and Brooklyn, as well as summonses issued citywide for building and fire code violations. The Chief Judge presided over a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new court, a \$20 million renovation funded by the City that includes a dedicated entrance, new lobby, and an extensively renovated 40,000 square foot space on the 16th floor of the 40-story, landmark David N. Dinkins Municipal Building at One Centre Street comprising three courtrooms and a spacious back office area to accommodate the Court's administrative operations.

Relocating the Summons Court to a modern, streamlined facility is a major step forward in a more comprehensive plan to improve the summons process. Launched as a partnership between the court system and the Mayor's Office in 2014, this project is improving the quality of justice for New Yorkers by making the summons process easier to understand and navigate. To date, this initiative has redesigned the paper summons form to make it simpler to read and understand; created a text message reminder system to ensure that defendants do not miss their

court appearances; and offered online payment options and more flexible court appearance dates and times, among other enhancements.

The new facility, formerly occupied by New York City's Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), has been revamped to expedite the flow of traffic and enhance case processing in the high-volume Summons Court. The redesign incorporates many high-tech elements, from an electronic check-in system that will reduce wait times to acoustical features to help ensure proper sound levels in the courtrooms and other areas.

New York court facilities are provided and operated by the cities and counties they serve, with the court system's Office of Facilities Planning offering architectural and other guidance relating to the design, renovation and construction of court facilities as well as services supporting their day-to-day management and operations. The Municipal Building is owned by the City of New York. The building where the Summons Court was previously located, at 346 Broadway in Manhattan, was sold by the City to a private corporation.

Summonses in New York City are issued by over 40 certified agencies, including the New York City Police Department, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the New York City Fire Department. The new Summons Court will house the citywide summons operation's central receiving unit, where authorized agencies deliver summonses issued throughout the five boroughs. The unit separates the summonses by borough and appearance date, then checks them for serious defects that would prevent their being docketed, before forwarding them to the appropriate borough to be reviewed for legal sufficiency prior to the scheduled arraignment date. In 2015, over 330,000 summons filings were processed by the central receiving unit.

"Having modern, clean and secure court facilities is integral to the Judiciary's vital mission. This beautiful new Summons Court, designed for optimal efficiency and navigability, will enable us to better serve the justice needs of the people of this great City, providing a dignified environment that fosters respect for and confidence in our justice system. I want to extend my gratitude to the Mayor's Office, the City's Department of Citywide Administrative Services, the Criminal Court of the City of New York and the courts' Office of Facilities Planning for their collaboration and support, to which we owe the successful transformation of this space into a highly functioning courthouse," said Chief Judge DiFiore.

"Trust is the foundation of public safety, and the principles of legitimacy – respect, fairness, transparency and voice – are the cornerstones of the City's work to ensure every New Yorker has confidence in the justice system. Design is a key piece of building trust: whether it is creating an open and welcoming courtroom, reducing wait times or providing clear explanations of the process. The Mayor and the City are grateful to the Chief Judge for her leadership and the

Office of Court Administration for its partnership in suffusing the design of the structure and process of the new Summons Court with the principles that advance our joint goals of improving the quality of justice for all New Yorkers,” said Elizabeth Glazer, Director of the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice.

“This new court facility demonstrates Mayor de Blasio’s commitment to the fair and equitable administration of justice. DCAS is proud that we delivered this project on time and under budget,” said DCAS Commissioner Lisette Camilo.

The new Summons Court, which will open for business on Monday, December 19, is expected to average 250 to 400 visitors daily.

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