



NEWS RELEASE

**New York State
Unified Court System**

**Hon. Joseph A. Zayas
Chief Administrative Judge**

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Chief Administrative Judge Zayas Appoints Housing Court Judges in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens

NEW YORK—Chief Administrative Judge Joseph A. Zayas and First Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Norman St. George today announced the appointment of New York City Housing Court Judges in four of the City’s five counties, which include five newly created judgeships to support Housing Court operations and meet increasing caseloads: Yekaterina Blinova and Adam R. Meyers in New York County (Manhattan); Jordan M. Dressler in Queens County; Leslie A. Granger and Amira E. Hassan in Bronx County; and Javier E. Ortiz and Elyssa O. Slutzky in Kings County (Brooklyn). Additionally, Alberto M. Gonzalez and Joan B. Rubel were appointed this past September to the City’s Housing Court bench in New York County. Serving five-year terms, New York City Housing Court Judges preside over proceedings in New York City Civil Court’s Housing Parts.

“New York City Housing Court is among the busiest courts in the nation, handling matters that directly impact New Yorkers’ day-to-day living conditions and livelihoods,” said Chief Administrative Judge Zayas. “We are deeply appreciative to the Governor and Legislature for funding these five new Housing Court judgeships, which we requested in our budget to further our efforts to address the backlogs in these courts and better serve the residents of New York City. The creation of these new judgeships has been part of our greater strategy to improve case processing and access to justice in Housing Court, which also included the hiring of new court attorneys and clerical staff to assist in this high-volume court.”

Chief Administrative Judge Zayas continued, “In addition to being thoroughly acquainted with landlord-tenant law and Housing Court procedure, each of these accomplished appointees possesses those skills and attributes—sound judgment, fairness, diligence, and integrity, among other qualities—required to effectively carry out the duties of their respective judicial assignments. We are fortunate to have such outstanding candidates to fill these critically important roles. I have no doubt that the pay increase for New York City Housing Court judges that was recommended by the New York State Commission on Legislative, Judicial, and Executive Compensation—making their pay equivalent to

that received by judges serving in all other parts of New York City Civil Court—contributed to such a strong group of candidates.”

“The demands placed on New York City’s Housing Court Judges are many, with these distinguished candidates up to the challenge, each having extensive knowledge of and experience in Housing Court matters and surrounding issues, along with a deep-rooted commitment to ensuring access to justice for New Yorkers of all needs and backgrounds. I have no doubt that these appointees will be assets to the City’s Housing Court and look forward to working with them in their new capacity,” said First Deputy Chief Administrative Judge St. George.

Joining the Unified Court System in 2017, **Yekaterina Blinova** initially worked as a court attorney in Bronx Housing Court and most recently served as an associate court attorney in the Kings County Supreme Court-Civil Term’s Law Department. Prior to her court career, she worked as a staff attorney in the New York Legal Assistance Group’s Tenants’ Rights Unit, representing low-income New Yorkers in Housing Court. Before that, she was an assistant borough coordinator at Housing Court Answers, providing legal information and assistance to unrepresented Housing Court litigants. She earned her J.D. from Brooklyn Law School.

Prior to his ascension to the New York City Housing Court bench this past September, Alberto Gonzalez was a staff attorney with Mobilization for Justice, Inc. (previously MFY Legal Services), representing tenants in all different phases of litigation including eviction defense, affirmative litigation, administrative hearings and appeals. He is a graduate of the University of Kansas School of Law and a member of the New York City Bar Association, the Dominican Bar Association, the Puerto Rican Bar Association, and the Latino Lawyers Association of Queens County, among other affiliations.

Adam Meyers is a founder of Brooklyn’s Communities Resist, where his most recent position was the Director of Litigation, leading a team that advocates for the provision of housing-related legal services, while also maintaining his own caseload, among other duties. Prior to founding the organization in 2019, he served as a deputy director at Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A, representing clients in housing-related matters. He is a graduate of Harvard Law School and a member of the New York City Bar Association’s Housing Court Committee.

Before her September 2023 appointment to the New York City Housing Court, Joan Rubel worked as an associate court attorney in Housing Court in Kings County for nearly five years. Previously, she was a senior associate attorney at a Long Island landlord-tenant firm, representing landlords, including individual owners and developers, as well as rent-regulated tenants. She also represented the City of New York in its capacity as a residential and commercial landlord during her tenure as a staff attorney at the Department of Housing Preservation and Development. She earned her J.D. from Brooklyn Law School.

Jordan Dressler has been employed by the Unified Court System since 2021, most recently serving as counsel to the Advisory Committee on Artificial Intelligence and the Courts and the Judicial Task Force on Mental Illness and as acting director for the

Office of Court Administration's Appointments Unit. From 2021 to 2023, he served as special counsel to New York City Housing Court, advising the court system's leadership on Housing Court policy, administration, and initiatives. Previously, he was appointed New York City's first civil justice coordinator, overseeing the provision of free legal services in housing, immigration, and other critical areas. He earned his J.D. from the Benjamin Cardozo School of Law.

Leslie Granger joined the New York State Office of Court Administration in 2018 as an associate court attorney, facilitating resolution of housing-related matters, among numerous other duties. Before working for OCA, she was in private practice, most recently employed as an associate attorney at Heigberger & Associates, P.C., where she litigated landlord-tenant and other housing-related matters. She is a graduate of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Albany Law School and worked as a software engineer prior to embarking on a legal career.

Amira Hassan has been serving as a court attorney in New York City's Housing Court in Queens since 2018, conferencing cases in the Court's Resolution and Trial Parts, performing legal research, and drafting decisions and orders. Previously, she served as a Poverty Justice Solutions Fellow at the Legal Aid Society in Queens, representing litigants in landlord-tenant disputes. She earned her J.D. from CUNY School of Law and, as a third-year law student, participated in the court system's Pro Bono Scholars program, performing pro bono services for low-income clients in New York City Housing Court. Ms. Hassan is a member of the New York City Bar Association's Housing Court Committee, the Muslim Bar Association of New York, and the Queens County Women's Bar Association.

Javier Ortiz has been serving as an associate court attorney to Hon. Jack Stoller, Supervising Judge of New York County Housing Court, conducting legal research, drafting orders and memos, and mediating settlements in addition to other duties. Before joining the court system, he was a staff attorney at Mobilization for Justice Inc.'s Housing Unit, representing clients in a range of housing matters, and prior to that worked at the New York Legal Assistance Group, which he joined in 2013 and where he represented litigants in Queens Housing Court. He earned his J.D. from St. John's University School of Law and is an alumni coach for the law school's moot court.

Elyssa Slutzky has been working as a court attorney-referee at Nassau County Supreme Court and a special counsel to the County's Village Courts. She first joined the Unified Court System in 2014 as an associate court attorney to then New York County Housing Court Supervising Judge Anne Katz, conducting legal research, settlement conferences, drafting stipulations, and coordinating the Judge's calendar in addition to other tasks. She began her legal career in 1993 as an associate attorney at a New York City law firm and is a graduate of New York Law School.

The appointments of Yekaterina Blinova, Leslie Granger, Amira Hassan, and Javier Ortiz are effective August 15, 2024; the appointments of Jordan Dressler, Adam Meyers, and Elyssa Slutzky go into effect on September 9, 2024.

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