



OPENING

COURTHOUSE DOORS

LIBRARIANS' PORTFOLIO
RESOURCES FROM NEW YORK STATE COURTS

INTRODUCTION

The New York State Court System, its judges, and other court system professionals and staff produce a range of publicly available materials that provide crucial information about the court system and the law. This portfolio gathers and organizes information that may be of particular interest to librarians, either as background or for use in assisting library patrons.

Librarians play an essential role in promoting and ensuring the public's access to justice as they are often the first contact the public turns to for legal information and an explanation of how the court system works. The information contained in this publication will enhance librarians' knowledge about the court system and allow them to guide their patrons more effectively.

GUIDE TO COURT SYSTEM RESOURCES

The materials referenced in this portfolio represent only a fraction of available information produced by courts in New York State. The following additional resources may also be of use to librarians:

- [HTTP://WWW.NYCOURTS.GOV](http://www.nycourts.gov), the website of the New York State Unified Court System, provides a wealth of information about the courts, including the basic structure of the court system, court programs and services, law, court procedure and assessments of court practice and recommendations for reform.
- **MYCOURTS-NY** (<http://www.nycourts.gov/youth/>), is a website for youth and educators in New York State that offers information about courts, law and justice, including links to helpful resources and innovative programs that offer young people opportunities to play an active role in their communities.
- **THE NEW YORK STATE COURTS: AN INTRODUCTORY GUIDE** (<http://www.nycourts.gov/admin/NYCcourts-IntroGuide.pdf>) provides an overview of how New York State courts work, and basic information on the structure of the courts, court programs and resources.
- **ACCESS TO JUSTICE** (<http://www.nycourts.gov/nya2j>) provides an overview of the New York State Court System's efforts to ensure access to justice for all New Yorkers. Website includes publications, news and events.
- [HTTP://WWW.NYCOURTS.GOV/COURTS/10JD/NASSAU/INDEX.SHTML](http://www.nycourts.gov/courts/10JD/NASSAU/INDEX.SHTML) provides a wide range of information about the Nassau County court system.

REFERENCE GUIDE FOR COMMON QUESTIONS

Where can I find basic information about the courts and law?

- **WWW.NYCOURTHELP.GOV: THE LAW**—Provides information about family law, civil law (e.g., housing and small claims), legal terms and law libraries.
- [HTTP://WWW.LAWHELP.ORG/NY](http://www.lawhelp.org/ny)—Provides information on a wide range of legal issues. Information is provided in over 30 languages.

How can I find a lawyer?

- **WWW.NYCOURTHELP.GOV: FIND A LAWYER**—Provides information on lawyer referral services.
- [HTTP://WWW.LAWHELP.ORG/NY](http://www.lawhelp.org/ny) —Provides a directory of offices and programs that provide free legal services in New York State, searchable by county.

I was told I need to fill out a form and bring it to court. How can I find the form I need?

- **WWW.NYCOURTHELP.GOV: FORMS**—Provides downloadable forms and several Do-It-Yourself (“DIY”) forms that users can complete using an easy-to-use web-based program.

Where is the courthouse? How can I contact someone there about my case?

- **WWW.NYCOURTHELP.GOV: COURT FACTS**—Provides addresses and contact information for New York State courts, searchable by county.
- In Nassau County: [HTTP://WWW.NYCOURTS.GOV/COURTS/10JD/NASSAU/INDEX.SHTML](http://www.nycourts.gov/courts/10JD/NASSAU/INDEX.SHTML) —Provides addresses and phone numbers for the Nassau County courts.
- Outside Nassau County: [HTTP://WWW.COURTS.STATE.NY.US/LITIGANTS/COURTGUIDES/INDEX.SHTML](http://www.courts.state.ny.us/litigants/courtguides/index.shtml) —Provides information about courts throughout New York State, including descriptions, addresses, phone numbers, directions to the courthouses, and hours of operation.

How do I know which court handles my problem?

- **WWW.NYCOURTHELP.GOV: COURT FACTS: THE RIGHT COURT FOR YOUR PROBLEM**

How can I get copies of court records?

- Contact the Clerk of the Court. See **NASSAU COUNTY COURTS**.

How can I find information about a specific court case?

- **WEBCRIMS**—Enables users to view pending criminal cases in Nassau County Court – Criminal Term and 1st District Court
http://iapps.courts.state.ny.us/webcrim_attorney/jcaptcha
- **WEBCIVIL SUPREME**—Provides information about active and disposed Civil Supreme Court cases in New York State.
<http://iapps.courts.state.ny.us/webcivil/FCASMain>

- **WEBCIVIL LOCAL**—Provides information about active cases in Local Civil Court cases in New York State.
<http://iapps.courts.state.ny.us/webcivilLocal/LCMain>
- **WEBFAMILY**—Provides information about active Family Court cases in New York State and Integrated Domestic Violence (IDV) Court cases in those counties with IDV Courts.
<http://iapps.courts.state.ny.us/fcasfamily/main>

Where can I find definitions of legal vocabulary and terms?

- [HTTP://WWW.NYCOURTS.GOV/COURTHELP/THELAW2.HTML](http://www.nycourts.gov/courthelp/thelaw2.html)

How can I find out about jobs in the court system?

- [HTTP://WWW.NYCOURTS.GOV/CAREERS](http://www.nycourts.gov/careers) —Provides job listings, application forms and job descriptions for careers in the New York State Court System.

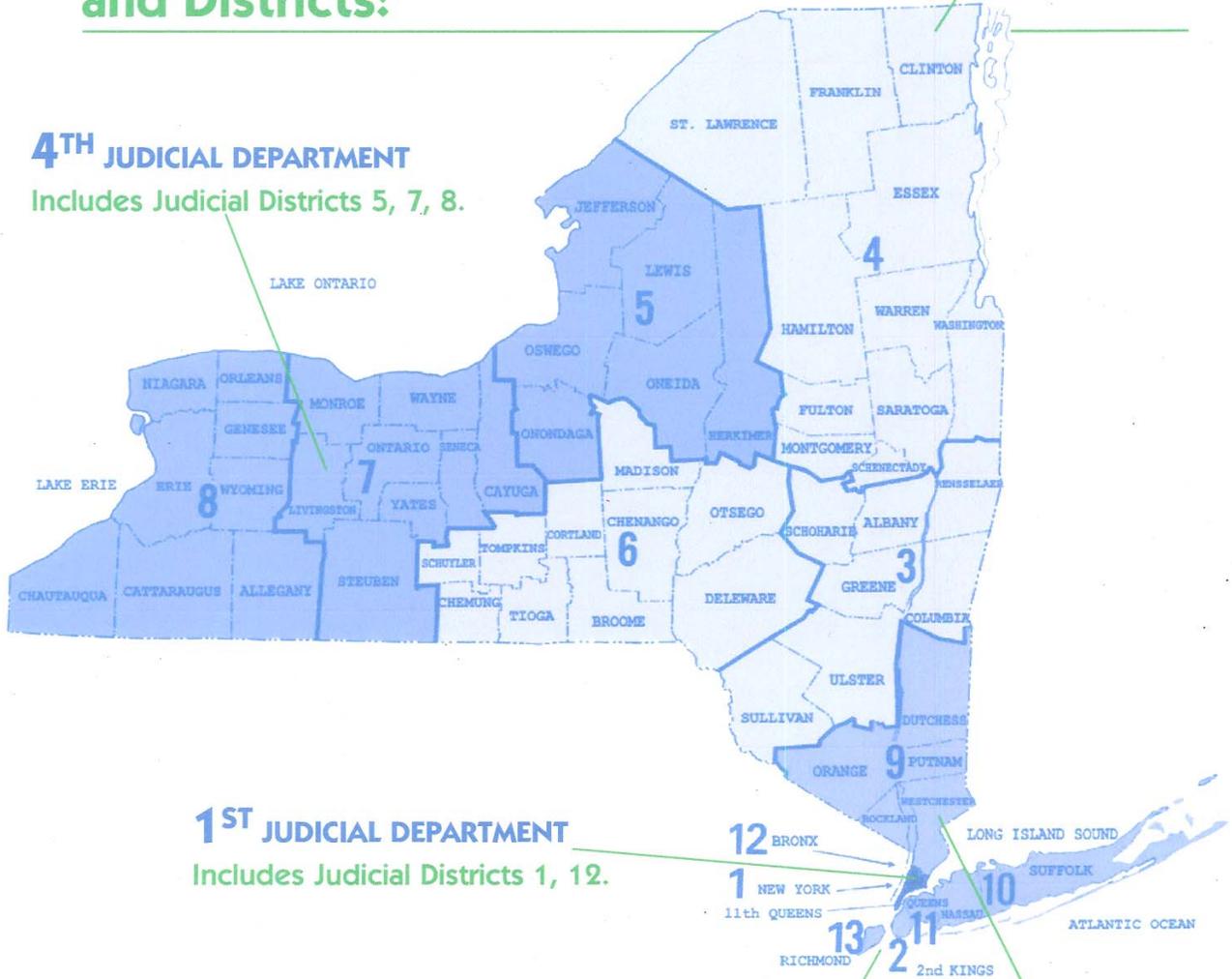
Judicial Departments and Districts:

3RD JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT

Includes Judicial Districts 3, 4, 6.

4TH JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT

Includes Judicial Districts 5, 7, 8.



1ST JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT

Includes Judicial Districts 1, 12.

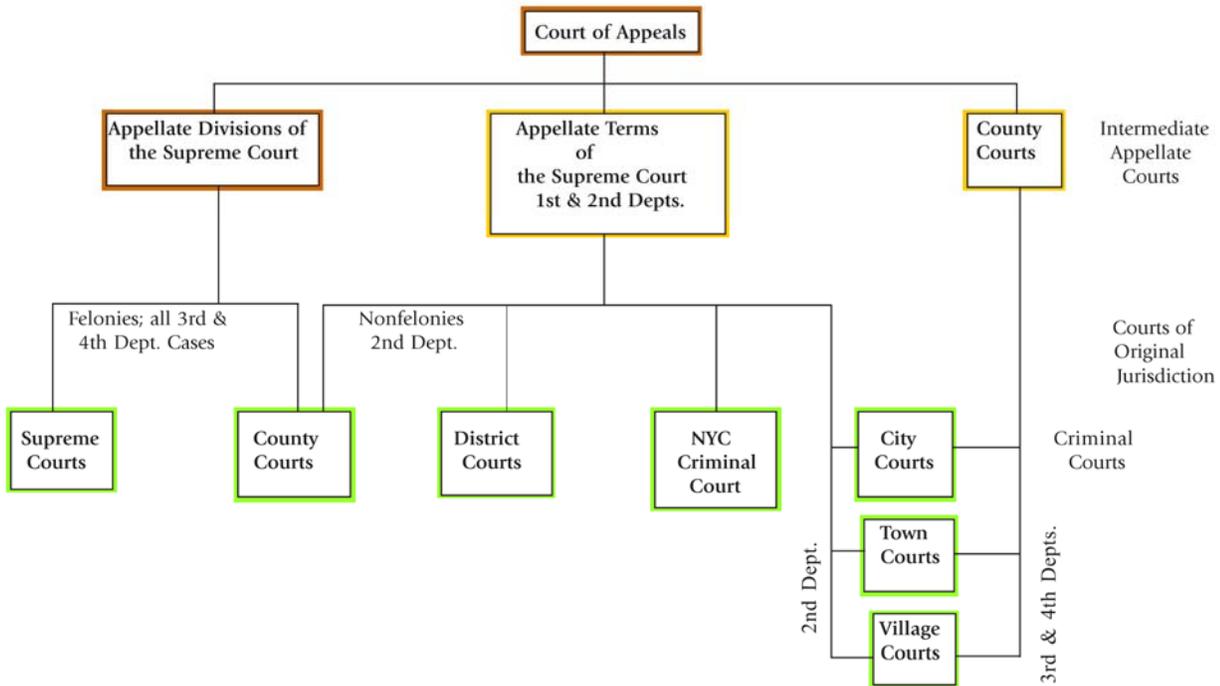
2ND JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT

Includes Judicial Districts 2, 9, 10, 11, 13.

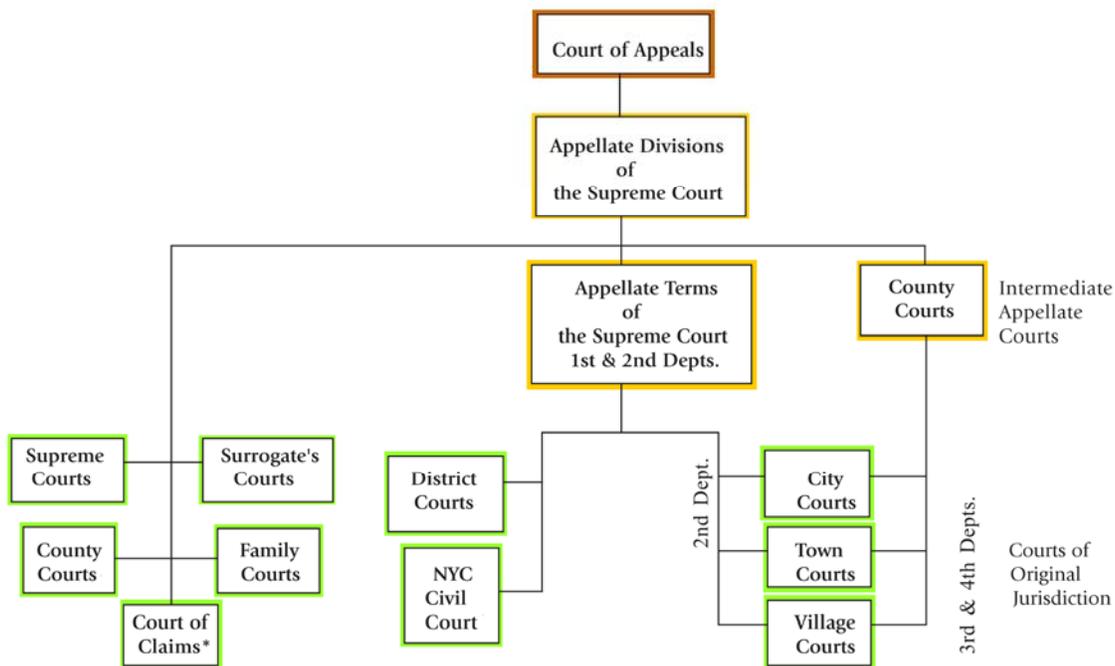


New York State Unified Court System

CRIMINAL COURT STRUCTURE



CIVIL COURT STRUCTURE



JURY SERVICE

Grand Juror Handbook

Handbook for citizens summoned to serve as grand jurors in New York State, answering commonly asked questions about grand jury service.

http://www.nyjuror.gov/users/wwwucs/pdfs/hb_Grand.pdf

Grand Juror Orientation Video: Protect and Uphold

Video presenting the purpose and responsibilities of grand jury service.

<http://www.nyjuror.gov/general-information/juror-orientation-videog2.php>

Petit Juror Handbook

Handbook providing basic information about petit jury service and answering commonly asked questions.

http://www.nyjuror.gov/users/wwwucs/pdfs/hb_Petit.pdf

Petit Juror Orientation Video: Your Turn

Video presenting the purpose and responsibilities of petit jury service.

<http://www.nyjuror.gov/general-information/juror-orientation-videop2.php>

Jury Service in New York State: A Guide for Employers and Employees

Information about jury service for employers and employees.

http://www.nyjuror.gov/users/wwwucs/pdfs/hb_EE.pdf

OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

Get Involved

Interactive web page listing law-related activities across New York State for youth who are interested in law, courts, and justice.

http://www.nycourts.gov/youth/get_involved/index.html

Public events calendar

On-line calendar providing information about New York State Unified Court System events open to and of interest to the public.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/admin/publicaffairs/calendar.shtml>

Student Ambassador Program

Program description and application information for the New York State court system's Student Ambassador Program, an internship program that places high school, college, and law school students under the guidance of judicial and non-judicial personnel.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/admin/publicaffairs/pdfs/SAProgram07.pdf>

CAREERS IN THE COURT SYSTEM

Careers in the Courts

Web pages containing information about careers in the courts, including available positions, job descriptions, and application forms.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/careers/>

Court Interpreting Services

Website providing information about career opportunities for court interpreters.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/courtinterpreter/careers.shtml>

Court Officer Trainee Recruitment Site

Website providing information about New York State court officer recruitment and training.

<http://www.courts.state.ny.us/careers/cot/>

A Guide to the Website: Careers in the New York State Courts

Document summarizing www.nycourts.gov/careers, which provides information regarding current job openings, examinations, and benefits.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/admin/publicaffairs/pdfs/Careers%20WebGuide%E2%80%93932007.pdf>

COURTHELP

CourtHelp ([HTTP://WWW.NYCOURTHELP.GOV](http://www.nycourthelp.gov)) is a website that offers information about courthouse locations, telephone numbers and other basic court data, free court forms, information about procedural and substantive law, and access to lawyer referrals. The information is presented in a user-friendly format in plain language and with simple, straightforward graphics. Information is available in English and Spanish.

CourtHelp information is integrated into the LawHelp website ([HTTP://WWW.LAWHELP.ORG/NY](http://www.lawhelp.org/ny)), which provides legal referral information and educational materials for the public. CourtHelp information is available on the LawHelp website in a section called “Going to Court.”

Litigants can use CourtHelp ([HTTP://WWW.NYCOURTHELP.GOV](http://www.nycourthelp.gov)) from any computer or at public computer terminals located in help centers and courthouses in Suffolk County.



[HTTP://WWW.NYCOURTHELP.GOV](http://www.nycourthelp.gov)

DIY FORMS

Almost two million New Yorkers appear without lawyers in New York State courts each year. The courts have worked in partnership with the civil justice community to develop resources to make courts more accessible to unrepresented litigants.

The New York State Courts Access to Justice Program has developed computer programs to help unrepresented New Yorkers navigate the legal system. Do-It-Yourself (DIY) Forms guide users through a series of questions then produce court forms and information sheets (e.g., what to bring to court hearings, how to file forms with the court, and fact sheets relevant to a specific case type) based upon litigants' responses.

Litigants can use the DIY Forms on-line by visiting [HTTP://WWW.NYCOURTHELP.GOV](http://www.nycourthelp.gov). Litigants also can obtain information and complete forms in Court Help Centers and many clerk's offices in the courthouses.

DIY FORMS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

STATE WIDE

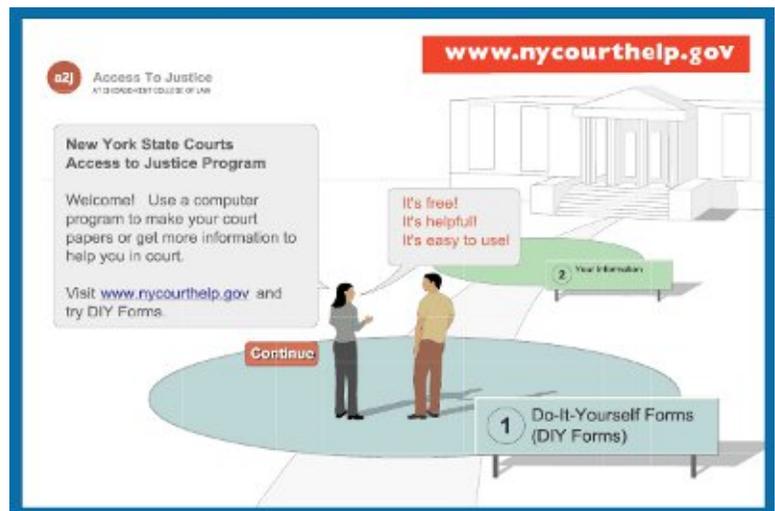
- Support Modification Petition
- Paternity Petition
- Small Estate Affidavit
- Name Change Petition

NEW YORK CITY ONLY

- Nonpayment Answer (English and Spanish)
- Small Property Owner Nonpayment Petition
- Tenant Affidavit to Vacate a Default Judgment
- Adult Name Change Petition
- Minor Name Change Petition
- Affidavit to Vacate a Default Judgment in a Consumer Debt Case

TIPS FOR USING DIY FORMS

- DIY Forms require Adobe Flash to use the program and Microsoft Word to see and print the completed court forms.
- Users can listen to a narration of on-screen text.
- Users can create accounts that allow them to save their work securely and use saved answers to complete additional forms. Users can also use the program without creating an account; they can complete forms and print them, but not save their answers.
- Users are prompted to accept the terms of use of the website program before they begin.



NASSAU COUNTY COURTS

Nassau County Supreme Court

100 Supreme Court Drive
Mineola NY 11501
(516) 571-2903

This court handles:

- Felonies
- Cases for more than \$25,000 in money damages
- Divorce, separation, and annulment
- Cases to stop, regulate, or supervise private or governmental activities.

County Court

262 Old Country Road
Mineola NY 11501
(516) 571-2800

This court handles:

- Felonies
- Misdemeanors
- Violations
- Cases for \$25,000 or less in money damages
- Appeals of decisions in City Courts, and Town and Village Courts

Surrogate's Court

262 Old Country Road
Mineola NY 11501
(516) 571-2847

This court handles:

- Wills, estates, and property of deceased persons
- Adoption
- Guardianships

Family Court

1200 Old Country Road
Westbury NY 11590
(516) 571-9033

This court handles:

- Cases involving families and children EXCEPT for divorce, separation, and annulment (handled by Supreme Court).
- The main types of Family Court cases are: family offense (orders of protection/domestic violence); child custody, guardianship, and visitation; child and spousal support; adoption; paternity; child neglect and abuse; juvenile delinquency; termination of parental rights; and review of foster care placement.

First District Court of Nassau County
99 Main Street
Hempstead NY 11550
(631) 572-2355

District Courts arraign felonies and handle misdemeanors and lesser offenses as well as civil lawsuits involving claims of up to \$15,000.

City Court of Glen Cove
13 Glen Street
Glen Cove NY 11542
(516) 676-0109

City Courts arraign felonies and handle misdemeanors and lesser offenses as well as civil lawsuits involving claims of up to \$15,000. Some City Courts have small claims parts for the informal disposition of matters involving claims of up to \$5,000 and/or housing parts to handle landlord-tenant matters and housing violations.

City Court of Long Beach
One West Chester Street
Long Beach NY 11561
(516) 431-1000

ON-LINE RESOURCES

AT THE COURTHOUSE

Court Interpreters Handout

Brochure explaining the availability and role of court interpreters and providing information for inquiring about one.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/admin/publicaffairs/pdfs/Language%20Cards.English.pdf>

FAQ's about Getting an Interpreter

Web page providing information on how to get a court interpreter.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/courtinterpreter/faqs.shtml>

Information Guidelines

Short video describing how to get help at the courthouse.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/courthelp/nolawyer5.htm>

Justice Works

Brochure providing information to help court users in reporting court-related problems, obtaining assistance with a case or arranging for special court accommodations, such as a court interpreter or an assistive listening device.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/litigants/JusticeWorks07.pdf>

COURT OF APPEALS

Annual Reports of the Clerk of the Court to the Judges of the Court of Appeals of the State of New York

Annual reports chronicling the work of the Court of Appeals, including an overview of matters filed with and decided by the Court, a summary of administrative accomplishments, highlights of selected decisions, detailed statistics and other information.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/ctapps/crtnews.htm#ANNUAL>

Court of Appeals of the State of New York

Pamphlet briefly describing the history and work of the Court of Appeals of the State of New York.

http://www.courts.state.ny.us/history/pdf/Library/Courts/COA_Pamphlet.pdf

Decisions by the Court of Appeals

Decisions by the Court of Appeals are available to the general public on the day of their release.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/ctapps/latdec.htm>

There Shall Be a Court of Appeals

Publication chronicling the history of the Court of Appeals of the State of New York.

http://www.courts.state.ny.us/history/pdf/Library/Courts/There_Shall_Be.pdf

CRIMINAL COURT

Criminal Justice System Handbook

Handbook designed to help court users and litigants understand how the criminal justice system works in New York State, from arrest through appeal.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/litigants/crimjusticesys handbk.shtml>

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Community Dispute Resolution Centers

Brochure providing basic information about Community Dispute Resolution Centers and how mediation works.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/ip/adr/Publications/Brochures/cdr cp.pdf>

Office of Alternative Dispute Resolution Programs

Brochure providing basic information about the programs offered by the Office of Alternative Dispute Resolution.

http://www.nycourts.gov/ip/adr/Publications/Brochures/adr_bro.pdf

Youth Initiatives and Educational Programs

Report summarizing youth initiatives and educational programs offered by Community Dispute Resolution Centers.

http://www.nycourts.gov/ip/adr/Publications/Info_for_Programs/Youth.pdf

FAMILY COURT

Court Information

Website describing and providing information about the Nassau County Family Court.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/courts/10jd/nassau/family.shtml>

Domestic Violence

Information about obtaining an Order of Protection in Family Court.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/courthelp/faqs/domesticviolence.html>

Domestic Violence articles and links to other related sites.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/courts/10jd/nassau/domesticviolence.shtml>

Forms

Links to Family Court forms including Do-It-Yourself forms.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/courthelp/forms.html>

<http://www.nycourts.gov/forms/familycourt/index.shtml>

Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently asked questions about Family Court proceedings.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/courts/10jd/Suffolk/FamilyQuestions.shtml>

GENERAL INFORMATION

Annual Reports of the Chief Administrator

Annual reports submitted to the Governor and Legislature detailing the activities of the court system, including data on caseload activity, information about the structure of the court system, a summary of court system initiatives and a review of the court system's legislative agenda.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/reports/annual/index.shtml>

Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently asked questions about the New York State court system.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/youth/faqs/index.html>

Glossary of Legal Terms

Glossary defining hundreds of legal words and terms.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/lawlibraries/glossary.shtml>

New York State Problem-Solving Courts

Brochure providing basic information about problem-solving courts, including community courts, sex offender courts, domestic violence courts, integrated domestic violence courts, drug treatment courts and mental health courts.

http://www.nycourts.gov/courts/problem_solving/PSC-FLYER4Fold.pdf

Short History of the New York State Court System

Article chronicling the history of the New York State court system.

http://www.courts.state.ny.us/history/pdf/Library/History/Short_History_of_NY_Court_System.pdf

State of the Judiciary Addresses

Annual addresses highlighting the work of the courts, especially new initiatives and notable accomplishments from the past year.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/admin/stateofjudiciary/>

Surrogate's Courts

Frequently asked questions about Surrogate's Courts—courts that hear cases involving the affairs of decedents, including the probate of wills, and the administration of estates and trust proceedings. Surrogate's Courts also have concurrent jurisdiction over guardianships of the person; property of infants and adoption proceedings.

<http://www.courts.state.ny.us/courts/nyc/surrogates/faqs.shtml>

GUARDIANSHIP

Guardian Assistance Network

Website providing support, practical advice and training for families or friends who have been appointed by the court to serve as guardians under Article 81 of the New York State Mental Hygiene Law.

<http://www.courts.state.ny.us/ip/gan/>

MATRIMONIAL MATTERS

Nassau County Matrimonial Center

The Matrimonial Center houses all of the dedicated Matrimonial Parts for the Supreme Court, including the Model Custody Part, and contains all of the matrimonial support staff with the exception of subpoenaed records.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/courts/10jd/nassau/matrimonial/index.shtml>

Matrimonial Matters Glossary

Glossary defining over one hundred legal words and terms used in matrimonial matters.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/ip/matrimonial-matters/glossary.shtml>

Parent Education and Awareness Program

Web site describing and providing information about the New York State Parent Education and Awareness Program, which is designed to educate divorcing or separating parents about the impact of their breakup on their children.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/ip/parent-ed/>

Resources about Divorce

Free instruction booklets and forms for people starting a divorce.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/ip/matrimonial-matters/forms.shtml>

RESEARCH RESOURCES

Bibliography: Family Law & Juvenile Law Materials

Bibliography of resources on family law and juvenile law.

http://www.nycourts.gov/lawlibraries/pdfs/FamilyJuvenile_Kings.pdf

Bibliography: Landlord & Tenant

Bibliography of resources on landlord and tenant law.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/lawlibraries/pdfs/LandTenantPathf.pdf>

Bibliography: Lien Law Bibliography of resources on lien law.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/lawlibraries/pdfs/LienLawPfinder.pdf>

Bibliography: Indian Studies

Bibliography of resources on Indian Studies.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/lawlibraries/pdfs/IndianSt.pdf>

Bibliography: Women in the Law

Bibliography of resources on women in the law.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/lawlibraries/pdfs/WomenLbib.pdf>

Law Libraries

Information on legal research, law libraries, public access libraries and LION, the court system's automated, on-line library catalog.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/lawlibraries/index.shtml>

SMALL CLAIMS

A Guide to Small Claims Court (New York City, Nassau County, Suffolk County)

Provides information about how to commence an action in any small claims court within New York City and Nassau and Suffolk Counties.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/courts/nyc/smallclaims/pdfs/smallclaims.pdf>

“How to Start a Small Claims Case” Seminar

Seminar providing basic information about how to start a small claims case.

http://www.nycourts.gov/courts/nyc/smallclaims/seminar_smallclaims.shtml

SMALL CLAIMS ASSESSMENT REVIEW

Information about a procedure that provides property owners with an opportunity to challenge the assessment on their real property as determined by the Board of Assessment Review (the Board) (in counties outside Nassau and NYC) or the Assessment Review Commission (ARC) (in NYC and Nassau County).

<http://www.nycourts.gov/litigants/scar/index.shtml>

TOWN AND VILLAGE COURTS

Town and Village Courts: Frequently Asked Questions

Web page answering common questions about Town and Village courts.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/courts/townandvillage/faqs.shtml> /

YOUTH AND CHILDREN

Children’s Centers in the Courts

Information about the nation’s first statewide system of court-based Children’s Centers, which provide a safe, literacy-rich environment and an opportunity for positive interventions in the lives of vulnerable children.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/ip/childrenscenter/index.shtml>

Civil Court Coloring Book

Activity book containing pictures of court scenes to color and games to play.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/courts/nyc/housing/colorbook.zip>

Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Information

Web page presenting basic information about the New York State Unified Court System CASA Assistance Program.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/ip/casa/AboutUS.shtml>

Promoting Literacy: Lessons from New York’s Court Based Literacy Project

Brochure describing the Children’s Center Literacy Project, which aims to create literacy-rich environments in the statewide system of Children’s Centers.

<http://www.nycourts.gov/ip/justiceforchildren/PDF/projectliteracy.pdf>



Hon. Fern A. Fisher
Director, New York State Courts
Access to Justice Program
646-386-4200