



PRESS RELEASE

**New York State
Unified Court System**

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

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OCA's Executive Office Restructured to Create New Appointments Unit; Key Posts Announced

NEW YORK—Chief Administrative Judge Joseph A. Zayas and First Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Norman St. George today announced the creation of a new unit within the Office of Court Administration's (OCA) Executive Office, tasked with overseeing and coordinating the various administrative functions associated with the appointments of judges and judicial hearing officers, as well as commissions established under the umbrella of the New York State Courts. Shane Tela and Jordan Dressler will each assume key posts as part of this restructuring, with Ms. Tela to serve as Director of the newly formed Appointments Unit; and Mr. Dressler, as Special Counsel for UCS Advisory Groups.

In her new role, Ms. Tela will work closely with Judges Zayas and St. George within OCA's Executive Office, acting as a liaison to the Governor's Office, New York City Mayor's Office and New York State Board of Elections regarding judicial vacancies and appointments; monitoring and certifying judicial vacancies to ensure statutory compliance; assuring the timely, proper distribution of judicial assignments; managing appointments of approximately 55 commissions and task forces, including committees established by Judiciary Law, the Chief Judge and Chief Administrative Judge; and overseeing all aspects of the Judicial Hearing Officer program (former or retired judges appointed by the Chief Administrative Judge to conduct pre-trial hearings and proceedings), among other duties.

As Special Counsel for UCS Advisory Groups, Mr. Dressler, working within OCA's Counsel's Office, will act as the principal liaison to the various commissions and task forces on behalf of the court system's leadership team. In this capacity, he will attend commission meetings, communicate the priorities and policies of the court system's leadership team to the commissions and task forces, and coordinate with the Appointments Unit to vet and recommend new commission and task force members, in addition to his other responsibilities.

“The formation of the Appointments Unit and creation of these key positions are pivotal steps as we restructure OCA’s Executive and Counsel’s Offices in our efforts to promote collaboration, increase efficiency and more effectively address the emerging needs of the New York State Courts. Shane and Jordan are experienced attorneys who bring a wealth of institutional knowledge to their respective assignments. I am eager to work closely with them in their new capacities,” said Chief Administrative Judge Zayas.

“The measures announced today will provide for a more coordinated, streamlined appointment process, serving to support and advance the delivery of justice in courts throughout New York’s 62 counties. I welcome Shane and Jordan to their new—and critically important—positions and look forward to their ongoing guidance and support,” said First Deputy Chief Administrative Judge St. George.

“I thank Chief Administrative Judge Zayas and First Deputy Chief Administrative Judge St. George for this important opportunity. It is my pleasure to serve the Executive Office in overseeing the Appointments Unit. I am steadfast in my dedication to public service and improving the delivery of justice, and I look forward to supporting the collective vision of Judges Zayas and St. George to streamline appointments in our court system,” said Ms. Tela.

“I am honored to have been selected to serve as Special Counsel for UCS Advisory Groups and am grateful for this opportunity to work with OCA’s leadership and our UCS commissions to help fulfill the court system’s essential mission to deliver equal justice to all timely and effectively. I am excited to be a part of the team at OCA and look forward to collaborating with our advisory groups to advance fairness, equity and efficiency in our courts,” said Mr. Dressler.

Since 2017, Shane Tela has served as an Assistant Deputy Counsel in the Office of the Chief Administrative Judge, where she developed statewide policies pertaining to court operations and initiatives, drafted statewide procedures for review by top court administrators, served on interview and hiring panels for Court Attorney positions statewide, implemented a process for certifying pre-trial services agency programs statewide as required by the Legislature and conducted research in various areas of the law, among other duties.

Previously, she was an Associate Appellate Counsel in the Legal Aid Society’s Criminal Appeals Bureau in Manhattan, representing indigent criminal defendants in appellate and ancillary post-conviction matters. Before that, she served as a Litigation Specialist in the Legal Aid Society’s Criminal Defense Practice in the Bronx, where she represented hundreds of indigent criminal defendants in all stages of litigation in violation, misdemeanor and felony cases and litigated on behalf of clients in collateral issues including immigration and housing.

She is a graduate of Williams College and Georgetown University Law Center.

Jordan Dressler joined OCA in 2021 in the role of Special Counsel, in which he has provided management support to the court system's leadership regarding New York City Housing Court policies and programs, also developing initiatives linking litigants to critical benefits, services and other support.

Previously, he served as New York City's first Civil Justice Coordinator, appointed by the Mayor to found and lead the City's Office of Civil Justice, which oversees the provision of free legal services in housing, immigration and other essential matters. Additionally, as Civil Justice Coordinator, he helped launch the City's Universal Access legal services program for tenants facing eviction in the New York City Housing Court. He has also served as Interim Chief External Affairs Officer and Senior Advisor for Strategic Initiatives for New York City's Human Resources Administration (HRA), overseeing interagency and public affairs and helping launch the City's municipal identification card program, IDNYC. Before joining HRA, he served as General Counsel in the New York City Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice. He began his legal career as a criminal defense attorney with the Legal Aid Society in the Bronx and later in private practice.

He is a graduate of Brown University and the Benjamin Cardozo School of Law.

The appointments are effective September 28, 2023.

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