



# **NEWS ADVISORY**

New York State  
Unified Court System

Hon. Deborah Karalunas  
Administrative Judge  
Fifth Judicial District

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## **Central New York's Fifth Judicial District to Unveil Help Center to Assist Area's Unrepresented Litigants**

**SYRACUSE, NEW YORK**—New York State court system leaders will join local judges, non-judicial staff, volunteer attorneys, law student volunteers and others to celebrate the grand opening of the Fifth Judicial District's Help Center on **Thursday, April 17 at 3:00pm**. Located in the **Onondaga County Courthouse (5<sup>th</sup> Floor) at 401 Montgomery Street in Syracuse**, the Help Center will serve as a free resource to assist unrepresented litigants navigate the courts and research the law and legal procedures and practices.

The District has partnered with the Volunteer Lawyers Project, Hiscock Legal Aid, Syracuse University Law School, and the law firms of Bond Schoeneck & King PLLC, Hancock Estabrook LLP, Gale Gale & Hunt LLC, Mackenzie Hughes LLP, and Blitman & King LLP to support the provision of legal information and assistance to Help Center visitors. The District will also be rolling out legal assistance services in the coming months to its other counties, which include Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Oneida, and Oswego, where court staff will be available at law libraries and other locations to provide legal information and assistance to court visitors.

Speakers at the Help Center's opening at the Onondaga County Courthouse will include **Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for the Courts Outside New York City Hon. James P. Murphy**, who in his former position as the District's Administrative Judge played an instrumental role in the Help Center's development; **Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Justice Initiatives Hon. Edwina G. Richardson**, whose office works to enhance access to justice services throughout New York's urban, suburban, and rural communities and oversees the court system's Help Centers; and **Fifth Judicial District Administrative Judge Hon. Deborah Karalunas**, who with her staff coordinated all aspects of the project—including reconstruction of the historic courthouse's library—to house the new Help Center, which will offer assistance in person and via email or phone. **County Executive Ryan McMahon, First Deputy County Executive Brian Donnelly**, and several **county legislators** will participate in the ribbon-cutting.

Light refreshments will follow the ceremony.

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