



NEWS RELEASE

**New York State
Unified Court System**

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

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UCS Advisory Group Reports on Progress Made, Next Steps to Advance Courtroom Innovations, Enhance Access to Justice

NEW YORK—An advisory group formed by the UCS judicial leadership to advance court innovations—many spurred by the pandemic—has released a report outlining the significant progress made to date, with recommendations for expanding and refining the use of virtual proceedings, increasing access for people who require accommodations, and enhancing systems for communicating with and supporting court users, among other improvements.

Led by retired Monroe County Supreme Court Justice Craig Doran and co-chaired by Kings County Supreme Court Justice Patria Frias-Colón and distinguished attorneys Scott B. Reents and William Silverman, the Court Modernization Action Committee comprises a cross-section of stakeholders from within and outside the Court System. The advisory panel has met regularly since being established in March 2023, holding listening sessions, eliciting feedback, and tracking the implementation of measures recommended by its forerunner, the Pandemic Practices Working Group of the Commission to Reimagine the Future of New York’s Courts, which was created in 2022 to identify innovation opportunities arising from the COVID crisis.

“While we have achieved new milestones in advancing court modernization efforts, much work remains as we carve out a roadmap for tomorrow and beyond in our mission to effectively respond to the ever-growing and evolving justice needs of New Yorkers who, seeking resolution from our courts, come from all walks of life and all areas of the State,” said Chief Administrative Judge Zayas.

“I am grateful for the CMAC’s guidance and support in the implementation of innovations and reforms that will serve to enhance operational efficiency, foster equal justice, and improve the court experience for all court users,” said First Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Norman St. George.

“Next steps” put forth in the CMAC’s report include:

- Examining rule changes and supporting legislation to expand the use of virtual court appearances
- Continuing the expansion of e-filing to include all court and case types

- Expanding the Court System’s Virtual Court Access Network sites, locations in libraries and other community spaces where unrepresented court users can access virtual court proceedings, file petitions, and communicate with court staff if they do not have access to necessary technology
- Developing and delivering training programs for judges and non-judicial personnel on ways to improve access to the courts, including virtual proceedings, for people with disabilities
- Continuing development and testing of the Court System’s reimagined website
- Developing uniform policies for livestreaming virtual proceedings
- Maintaining and fostering key partnerships to support funding of A/V and other courtroom technology upgrades
- Conducting ongoing review and expansion of a pilot telecommuting program launched last year for select UCS job titles, allowing personnel to telecommute one day per week, to ensure the Court System remains a competitive employer, attracting and retaining qualified employees

The CMAC’s full report is available online at
<https://www.nycourts.gov/LegacyPDFS/CMI/2024Prog-report.pdf>.

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