



# PRESS RELEASE

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New York State  
Unified Court System

Hon. Lawrence K. Marks  
Chief Administrative Judge

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## **High-Tech Courtroom Designed to Better Serve the Needs of Children and Families Opens in Brooklyn**

*Brooklyn Courtroom Is Among Several Technologically Advanced Sites Recently Launched by the NYS Courts*

**New York City** – A state-of-the-art courtroom designed to enhance the delivery of justice to children and families served by the New York City Family Court was unveiled today in Brooklyn. Among those on hand to celebrate its opening were Chief Administrative Judge Lawrence K. Marks, Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Justice Initiatives Edwina G. Mendelson, New York City Family Court Administrative Judge Jeanette Ruiz, and Dr. William C. Bell, president and chief executive officer of Casey Family Programs, which works to safely reduce the need for foster care and supported the launch of the high-tech courtroom.

The Kings County Integrated Courtroom Technology (ICT) part has been specially outfitted to ease the handling of trials, with such features as:

- A tech-based evidence system that enhances the presentation of evidence, supporting the clear display of electronic and physical evidence, with an annotation monitor that allows witnesses to mark exhibits
- Audio-video capabilities to facilitate remote court interpreting, as needed, and remote court proceedings (as permitted by law) in serving the best interests of children and families
- Advanced acoustical elements to ensure proper sound levels throughout the courtroom, including assistive-listening aids for hearing-impaired individuals
- Real-time court reporting capabilities for instantaneous voice-to-text transcription

- Wireless internet access for all participants

The Brooklyn ICT part, which seamlessly incorporates multiple high-tech components in a modular, user-friendly platform designed to ensure full access to all court participants, is the latest in a series of technological advances implemented by the New York City Family Court.

Within the past few years, the Court's case records have become entirely digital, making it the largest family court in the nation to rely solely on digital files; documents are now signed electronically, providing greater security; digital copies of orders are instantly available to the Administration for Children's Services and organizations that provide legal representation to litigants and children; case records on appeal are delivered electronically to the Appellate Division; "CourtCasts," a series of training and refresher podcasts, are available to assist judges, legal and clerical staff; the "Appointment Express" system permits litigants the option of online scheduling of appointments to file petitions; "Do-It-Yourself" programs allow the public to initiate certain types of cases electronically; and a queueing system alerts those waiting for assistance at the Court Clerk's Office of their place on the line.

Additionally, the high-tech court part launched today in Brooklyn follows the recent roll-out of three other ICT sites in New York City Family Court: one in the Bronx that handles juvenile delinquency matters; another in Manhattan that hears child welfare cases; and a third in a trial part in Queens that hears custody, visitation and family offense cases.

Judge Ruiz and her staff worked closely with the court system's Division of Technology (DoT) to install the four ICT sites, purposely opting to implement them in court parts with different specialties. The New York City Family Court will continue to collaborate with DoT to assess the ICT model's impact on each of the four distinct court parts.

"The use of technology to improve efficiency, reduce costs and enhance the court experience for all users is a key priority of the court system and a linchpin of Chief Judge DiFiore's Excellence Initiative to provide the highest level of justice services to all New Yorkers. I am thankful to all those responsible for the successful launch of this newest ICT site, which supports the Family Court's vital mandate, and commend the New York Courts' technology division for its vision and dedication in leveraging the latest technology to advance the delivery of justice in New York," said Chief Administrative Judge Marks.

"From enabling domestic violence survivors to petition the court for a temporary order of protection from a remote, safe location to allowing incarcerated parents to participate in their child's permanency hearing via audio-visual means to facilitating the use of remote interpreting services on behalf of litigants and witnesses with limited English proficiency, the new Brooklyn ICT part expands access to justice for children and families. We owe the launch of this

innovative courtroom to the generosity of Casey Family Programs and the fruitful collaboration of our dedicated Family Court and DoT employees, especially the court system’s Chief Technology Officer, Sheng Guo, who spearheaded the project,” said Judge Ruiz.

“I am so proud to be here today. The New York City Family Court has consistently been at the forefront of advances in technology. The Brooklyn ICT part will significantly enhance access to justice for so many unrepresented litigants, especially those with limited ability to appear for critical court dates, including individuals with physical disabilities,” said Judge Mendelson.

“New York City Family Court is providing tremendous leadership and vision by launching the first fully automated and electronic-driven family court in the country. The lessons learned through New York City’s pioneering efforts can inform juvenile and family courts around the country how to harness technology to enhance services to families and achieve safety and permanency for vulnerable children,” said Dr. Bell.

The ICT model was first implemented in the New York Courts in April 2016. Currently, there are over 20 ICT parts in operation or under way in New York City, its surrounding counties and upstate, with the court system planning to install 20 more ICT parts in courthouses across the State over the next year.

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