



PRESS RELEASE

**New York State
Unified Court System**

**Hon. Lawrence K. Marks
Chief Administrative Judge**

**Contact:
Lucian Chalfen, Public Information Director
Arlene Hackel, Deputy Director
(212) 428-2500**

www.nycourts.gov/press

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New York State Court System’s Purchase of Software System to Bring Cost Savings, Other Benefits to Town and Village Courts

New York – Chief Administrative Judge Lawrence K. Marks today announced the New York State court system’s \$4.5 million purchase of an automated case management system developed by Service Education, Inc. (SEi) and used by over 95 percent of New York’s Town and Village Justice Courts – an acquisition that will save \$1.5 million annually in licensing fees, among other benefits.

There are nearly 1300 Justice Courts located in towns and villages in the counties outside New York City. Collectively, they hear roughly two million cases and collect some 250 million dollars in fees, fines and surcharges yearly. These courts have jurisdiction over a broad range of matters – from handling small claims, landlord-tenant and other civil matters to conducting arraignments in criminal cases – with many New Yorkers having their first or only court experience in a Justice Court.

While the trial and appellate courts comprising New York State’s Unified Court System are state-paid entities, New York’s Town and Village Justice Courts rely on local funding, thereby lacking the ability to take advantage of the management tools routinely employed by the state-paid courts, such as the development of integrated technological solutions.

Prior to the court system’s purchase of SEi’s automated system, dubbed “The CourtRoom Program” and created by a former town justice, each municipality was responsible for payment

of any licensing fees and other costs associated with the use of the SEi software by its Justice Courts; licensing fees ranged from \$1300 to \$4500 yearly per court, depending on the program features purchased.

Though the decision by most of New York's Justice Courts to purchase the SEi case management system had worked well operationally, there were inherent risks in relying exclusively on a proprietary product owned by a small, private company – risks that were of serious concern due to the vital role these courts play in New York State's judicial system.

In addition to the annual cost-savings to municipalities across the State, the court system's purchase of the case management software will also make sensitive case information more secure, with data transferred from SEi's private servers to state-owned and managed servers.

Further, the court system's ownership of the software will facilitate system modifications and upgrades, serving to improve data transmission, including the transfer of case disposition data to the State's Division of Criminal Justice Services and Department of Motor Vehicles; the transmission of fee, fine and surcharge collection data to the State Comptroller's Office; and the transfer of arraignment-related data in a criminal case from the Justice Court where the arraignment was held to the state-paid court that will handle the case post-arraignment.

"This transaction will save New York's municipalities millions of dollars going forward. The acquisition of the SEi case management system is the latest step in a series of measures taken by the New York State court system to assist the State's Town and Village Justice Courts in their operation and enhance the quality of justice administered by these locally-funded tribunals, which form a critical part of New York's justice system," said Chief Administrative Judge Marks.

"On behalf of the New York State Magistrates Association, representing the 1800-plus Town and Village Justices statewide, we are excited by the court system's purchase of the SEi program and extend our gratitude to Chief Judge Janet DiFiore, Chief Administrative Judge Marks and Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Michael V. Coccoma for their efforts to that end. We are especially appreciative of the cost savings to our towns and villages and hopeful that the local funds previously expended for the annual licensing and maintenance fees will now be available for other needed Justice Court expenditures," said Hon. David S. Gideon, a Town of Dewitt Justice and President of the New York State Magistrates Association.

The New York State court system's Division of Technology will provide and maintain the automated case management system at no cost to the Justice Courts.

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