



PRESS RELEASE

**New York State
Unified Court System**

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

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New York City Family Court Becomes State's Highest-Volume Court to Go Fully Digital

New York – Chief Administrative Judge Lawrence K. Marks today announced the New York City Family Court's successful transition from paper to digital files, making it the largest court in the state – with over 213,000 cases filed last year – to convert entirely to digital case files. The conversion was completed six months prior to schedule.

Starting today, the New York City Family Court, which is led by Administrative Judge Jeanette Ruiz and hears matters ranging from adoption to child support to juvenile delinquency, will digitize all documents for newly filed cases citywide, enhancing both the Court's efficiency and accessibility, reducing its carbon footprint and resulting in monetary savings on paper and related purchases.

The conversion to digital files began in the Family Court in Queens in October 2012. The project was then expanded on a limited basis to Manhattan and the Bronx. Recent implementation of the Family Court's visionary Strategic Plan – along with last year's launch of the Chief Judge's Excellence Initiative – brought renewed focus to the digitization project, accelerating its full expansion to the Bronx in December 2016, Staten Island in May 2017, Manhattan on June 1, and today in Brooklyn.

Going forward, Family Court filings in all five boroughs will either be shared electronically or converted to a digital format by the Court. New York City Family Court judges, support magistrates, court attorney referees and judicial hearing officers will review all court documents online, with petitions and orders to be signed electronically. Attorneys and agencies

with access to the Court's case management system – including the City's Administration for Children's Services, Office of Child Support Enforcement and Law Department, the Legal Aid Society and providers of assigned counsel services – are now able to view and print all signed orders and petitions remotely. Appropriate data and signed documents can be exchanged with filing agencies via computer interfaces; and an interface with the New York City Police Department allows for the transfer of arrest warrant information.

Among the many benefits of the conversion are:

- Remote, simultaneous access to information by the litigants and other parties who have the right to view court files in the case
- Reallocation of valuable court staff resources that can be freed up for more critical duties via elimination of copying and other tasks associated with paper filing
- Cost savings achieved by decreasing the need for physical storage of paper documents
- Minimization of the danger of loss of records by fire, flood or other natural disaster, as digitized documents can be backed up and saved
- Monetary savings attained by significant reductions in the purchase of file folders and other products related to the paper-filing process
- Judges' immediate access to electronically transmitted reports, which can be viewed from the bench or in chambers

“Digitization is integral to the Judiciary's ongoing work to increase accessibility, expedite case processing, improve overall efficiency and keep pace with public expectations of justice. As a paperless entity, the New York City Family Court will now be more ably equipped to optimize resources and manage its heavy caseload. I commend Judge Ruiz for her leadership in successfully expediting this large-scale digital conversion and appreciate the collective contributions of the Court's dedicated judges and non-judicial employees to that end,” said Chief Administrative Judge Marks.

“The transition from paper to digital files is a giant leap forward as the New York City Family Court endeavors to maximize efficiency and attain excellence in all aspects of its operations. The implementation of this critical initiative – to which we owe the support of the Court's hardworking judges and staff, including the extraordinary efforts of the Chief Clerk's Office – will enable the Court to more effectively respond to the needs of New York City's children and families in carrying out its vital mission,” said Administrative Judge Ruiz.