



NYS UNIFIED COURT SYSTEM
Covid-19 Frequently Asked Questions

During the courthouse closures caused by the Covid-19 public health crisis, many court proceedings are taking place virtually, that is, on-line. As courthouses re-open, some in-person proceedings will resume. Whether your proceeding is virtual (remote) or in-person, if you have a disability that limits your ability to come before the court, you are entitled to an accommodation to enable you to participate.

Q: I have a disability and I need an accommodation to participate in a virtual (remote) court proceeding. How do I get one?

A: If you have received an e-mail Join Microsoft Teams Meeting invitation for a proceeding, contact the judge's chambers or other court staff that sent it. Please do so as much in advance of the proceeding as you can.

Q: I cannot come to the courthouse because my disability puts me at greater risk of serious consequences from Covid-19. What should I do?

A: If you are involved in a pending court case, contact the judge who is presiding over the case, or the judge's staff. Explain to the judge that you need an accommodation because of your disability, and request that you be allowed to appear by video or phone instead, or that the case be adjourned until it is safe for you to appear in person.

If you need assistance from the clerk's office or a HELP Center, go to

<http://www.nycourts.gov/courts> and use the Court Locator to get contact information for the Chief Clerk.

Q: I need to appear remotely -- how does Microsoft Teams work? Are there other options for me to participate?

A: To participate in a virtual court appearance using Teams, you need to install the Teams app (for free), test your audio and video, and join the Teams meeting scheduled by the court. To be on the safe side, please join the meeting ahead of time to make sure your audio device and webcam are working properly and get yourself familiar with the Teams interface. For more information on how to use Teams, please see our [Virtual Court Appearances](#) page.

You also may be able to appear by telephone – ask the judge before your scheduled remote appearance.

Q: I need a sign language interpreter and/or real time court reporting. How does this work if the proceeding is remote?

A: The court can provide sign language interpreting or CART reporting for the Deaf or hard of hearing for proceedings held remotely via video. Please contact the court as much in advance of the scheduled proceeding as possible to arrange for these accommodations. The court will then provide further information on how to attend a Microsoft Teams meeting with the assistance of

sign interpretation or CART reporting. Because of the technology issues involved, if you do not make this request in advance the proceeding may need to be adjourned.

Q: I am not able to operate a computer without assistance. Will the court let someone assist me during the remote appearance?

A: Yes. The court may ask the person who is assisting you to provide their name, but they will not be able to speak for you or to argue your case unless they are an attorney.

Q: If I cannot wear a mask during the entire time, I am in the courthouse because of my health condition, can I still appear in person? If not, what should I do?

A: Masks are required for entrance to the courthouse and in all public areas, but if because of a disability you cannot wear a mask you will be allowed in the building if you wear a face shield instead. Alternatively, you should contact the judge presiding over the case to request a remote appearance as a reasonable accommodation. Please provide advance notice, if at all possible, so that the necessary arrangements can be made. If a judge has not been assigned to your case, call the court's Chief Clerk for assistance. Please go to <http://www.nycourts.gov/courts> and use the Court Locator to find the phone number for the Chief Clerk.

Additional questions may be directed to:

The Office of the ADA Coordinator

Email: ada@nycourts.gov

Telephone: (212) 428-2760