


JUDICIARY BUDGET 2017-2018 BUDGET REQUEST EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pursuant to Article VII, Section 1 of the State Constitution, the Judiciary respectfully submits the following itemized estimate of its financial needs for Fiscal Year 2017-2018.



At her investiture as New York's new Chief Judge earlier this year, Janet DiFiore announced, as her highest priority, the Excellence Initiative, a comprehensive and critical evaluation of court operations and administration at every level. As noted by the Chief Judge, this system-wide review is the first step toward a larger purpose--nothing less than "operational and decisional excellence in everything that we do" in the Judiciary.

This budget request reflects the Judiciary's renewed commitment to and focus on excellence. To ensure that the courts have the resources necessary to fulfill their constitutional mission, this request seeks \$2.18 billion for the State Operations portion of the Judiciary budget. That represents an increase of \$42.7 million, or two percent, over current-year cash funding. In addition, the Judiciary is seeking a capital appropriation of \$15 million, to rebuild the technology and security infrastructure necessary to support the work of the courts. In sum, this request seeks the resources necessary to deliver justice in a manner that reflects the full measure of the State's commitment to a just society under the rule of law.

The Excellence Initiative: Back to Basics

The initial focus of the Excellence Initiative is on court fundamentals – the Judiciary's core mission to fairly and promptly adjudicate each of the millions of cases filed in the New York State courts every year. Working closely with our Administrative Judges and local court administrators, and consulting the bar, prosecutors and other partners in the justice community, we have undertaken an extensive examination into the causes of the backlogs, bottlenecks and delays in adjudicating cases. Based on this self-examination, we are designing and implementing solutions – such as restructuring how courts process cases, redeploying judges and nonjudicial employees to fully maximize our resources, and increasing trial capacity – tailored to the needs of individual courts and jurisdictions.

A critical feature of these efforts is obtaining and analyzing timely and accurate data. Consequently, we have devoted substantial efforts to developing new data tools--dashboards that allow us to analyze the court system's enormous case inventory, in real time, to identify problems earlier and with greater precision. These tools also allow the development of objective metrics and standards which permit swift assessment of management successes and deficiencies.

The data show that we have already made significant progress in addressing delays and backlogs. But there is more that remains to be done, and we will continue to focus on this core issue.