



NEWS RELEASE

**New York State
Unified Court System**

**Hon. Joseph A. Zayas
Chief Administrative Judge**

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Judges Zayas and St. George Name Director of OCA's Newly Formed Division of Alternative Dispute Resolution

NEW YORK—Chief Administrative Judge Joseph A. Zayas and First Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Norman St. George today announced the appointment of Lisa Courtney as Director of the Office of Court Administration's (OCA) newly formed Division of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), which will work to further the Unified Court System's efforts to significantly expand the development and use of ADR programs, online tools, and other resources to better meet the justice needs of New Yorkers statewide.

ADR refers to the alternative ways people can peacefully resolve disputes and conflicts without a trial. Common ADR processes include mediation, neutral evaluation, arbitration, Community Dispute Resolution Centers, and settlement conferences, which are generally confidential, less formal, and less trying than traditional court proceedings. Mediation and other forms of ADR have proven meaningful, efficient, and cost effective in resolving a range of disputes, from small claims to business matters to family conflicts, among others.

In her new capacity, Ms. Courtney, working with the judicial leadership and the Unified Court System's justices, judges, non-judicial personnel, and stakeholders, will lead a team of professional staff in carrying out the Division's mandate to advance the utilization of mediation and other forms of ADR, as appropriate, in courts statewide. As Director, she will be responsible for leading all ADR programs and committees, working with the Deputy Chief Administrative Judges, Administrative Judges, the Chief Judge's Advisory Committee on ADR, and regional and local ADR coordinators, among others, to develop, implement, and monitor court-sponsored ADR programs, which provide free or reduced-fee mediation and other ADR services in family, civil, and other matters. In addition to her other duties, she will provide and monitor ADR training of court staff and

members of the bar who serve in court programs; oversee the statewide network of Community Dispute Resolution Centers, which offer dialogue and ADR services to individuals, families, and communities in family, housing, contractual and other disputes; develop and implement ADR initiatives, policies, and best practices; work to expand online tools and other ADR resources; and oversee data collection and reporting.

“ADR offers parties an opportunity to be more fully heard, helping them reach mutually acceptable, longer-lasting outcomes. Expanding and refining the court system’s ADR services and online tools is essential to our ongoing efforts to improve the delivery and quality of justice for all New Yorkers, regardless of income, background, or need,” said Chief Administrative Judge Zayas. “That is why I am so pleased to announce the launch of the new Division of ADR, with Lisa Courtney at its helm. Lisa brings an abundance of knowledge, experience, and passion to her new role and, having distinguished herself in her former post as the court system’s Statewide ADR Coordinator, is uniquely qualified to assume the multiple demands and challenges of this critically important assignment. I look forward to our working together, along with the court system’s leadership team, judges, non-judicial personnel, and stakeholders, to optimize the use of ADR in more effectively addressing the justice needs of New Yorkers throughout the State’s 62 counties.”

“Lisa Courtney has spent much of her professional life initiating programs to reduce barriers to justice and enhance the operational efficiency of the New York State Courts, from training volunteer attorneys to serve in the court system’s Help Centers, to implementing mediation pilot programs, to crafting ADR program rules, to her efforts to recruit, train, and retain individuals who reflect New York’s rich diversity to serve as mediators and ADR trainers,” said First Deputy Chief Administrative Judge St. George. “Not only is Lisa well-versed in all forms of ADR, she’s also an effective leader, collaborator, and communicator, qualities that will benefit the Division, the court system, and those individuals and families served by the courts.”

“I am honored and excited to continue the work of making ADR, and, in particular, high-quality mediation, more accessible throughout New York State, together with our judicial and non-judicial leaders, dedicated regional and local ADR coordinators, and ADR staff. I am grateful to the judicial leadership team for their vision and commitment to advancing ADR in our courts and communities, so we can offer litigants a greater voice in the resolution of their disputes, and provide more effective, comprehensive justice,” said Lisa Courtney.

Lisa Courtney has been serving as OCA’s Statewide ADR Coordinator, leading the ADR Office staff and advising trial courts on ADR program development, drafting ADR program rules and protocols, overseeing ADR training, and recruiting mediators and ADR trainers, along with her other responsibilities. Previously, from 2007 to 2017, she worked as Special Projects Counsel for OCA’s ADR Office, where she mediated court-referred divorce and parenting disputes, trained legal services providers in mediation, implemented Family Court and Supreme Court early mediation pilot programs, and recruited and trained attorneys, mental health professionals, and others in collaborative practice for the court system’s Collaborative Family Law Center, which offered free

divorce mediation services in appropriate cases to reduce the pain, trauma, and expense of divorce on families. Before that, she served briefly as an instructor at Brooklyn Law School, teaching legal writing and research to first-year law students.

Ms. Courtney first joined the court system in 2001 as a senior court attorney in the Housing Part of the Civil Court of the City of New York, conducting conferences, drafting agreements and decisions, and supervising student interns, among other duties. She later oversaw the Civil Court's Volunteer Lawyer's Program, Help Centers, Community Seminars, and Mediation Program. She began her legal career as a litigation associate at Kramer Levin Naftalis & Frankel, LLP in New York City.

Ms. Courtney is a graduate of Columbia College and Columbia University School of Law, where she was a Harlan Fiske Stone Scholar. She is a former co-chair of the New York Women's Bar Association's ADR Committee and the recipient of the NY Peace Institute's 2019 Peace Raiser Award.

Her appointment is effective March 14, 2024.

For more information about the court system's ADR programs, go to:

[Alternative Dispute Resolution in the Courts | NYCOURTS.GOV](https://www.nycourts.gov/ADR)

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