

The logo for the New York City Bar, featuring the text "NEW YORK CITY BAR" in a serif font, centered between two horizontal blue bars.

NEW YORK
CITY BAR

**COUNCIL ON JUDICIAL
ADMINISTRATION**

MICHAEL P. REGAN
CHAIR
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June 2, 2021

Via Email

The Honorable Deborah A. Kaplan
Administrative Justice
New York County Supreme Court,
Civil Branch
60 Centre Street
New York, New York 10007

Re: Civil Forum in New York County

Dear Justice Kaplan:

For many years, an essential part of the New York City Bar Association’s mission has been to promote excellence and accessibility in all aspects of court operations and legal practice. The City Bar and its Council on Judicial Administration believe that as the courts, practitioners, and those they serve face novel challenges and opportunities, robust communication and collaboration are essential to achieve these ends. The City Bar and the Council have been exploring, therefore, new ways for the bar and the bench to increase dialogue about existing court procedures, ideas for refining processes, and emergent topics such as the continuing changes necessitated by COVID-19.

Members of the City Bar and the Council have expressed interest in a virtual “civil forum” for New York County to facilitate open discussions among attorneys, judges, and court administrators on important issues, with a goal of establishing in-person meetings when possible in the future. Though we recognize that the Courts utilize many channels of communication and solicit feedback in a variety of ways, we are not aware of an existing forum of this nature in New York County. We are writing, therefore, to inquire whether Court Administration in New York County may have interest in a “civil forum” and, if it does, to offer the City Bar’s assistance in establishing such a forum.

About the Association

The mission of the New York City Bar Association, which was founded in 1870 and has 25,000 members, is to equip and mobilize a diverse legal profession to practice with excellence, promote reform of the law, and uphold the rule of law and access to justice in support of a fair society and the public interest in our community, our nation, and throughout the world.

THE ASSOCIATION OF THE BAR OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
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This inquiry is based on the very positive experiences that Council members have had by virtue of participating in the Kings County Civil Forum. Members report that the forum has led to many productive discussions concerning courthouse practices, specialized parts, and case assignment and management. In particular, the Honorable Carolyn Demarest, who served as Presiding Justice of the Commercial Division in Kings County and is a member and past Chair of the Council, would be pleased to share the benefit of her past experience in leading the Kings County Civil Forum. The Honorable Lawrence Knipel, New York State Administrative Judge for Civil Matters in Kings County, also is a member of the Council and is willing to provide advice regarding the administration of a civil forum.

We stand ready to assist and support the Supreme Court in its work to promote dialogue and understanding of the Court and Court procedures, and we welcome a discussion at your convenience.

Respectfully,

Michael P. Regan
Chair, Council on Judicial Administration
New York City Bar Association

Susan Turk
Member, Council on Judicial Administration
New York City Bar Association

cc: Hon. Lawrence K. Marks
Chief Administrative Judge,
New York State Unified Court System

Hon. George Silver
Deputy Chief Administrative Judge
for New York City Courts

Hon. Carolyn Demarest (Ret.)
Member, Council on Judicial Administration

Maria Cilenti, Senior Policy Counsel
New York City Bar Association