


# **JUDICIARY BUDGET 2018-2019 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 2018-2019.

This request seeks \$2.23 billion for the State Operations portion of the Judiciary budget, which represents an increase of \$44.4 million, or two percent, over current-year cash funding. The request seeks the funds necessary to provide the courts with the resources needed to fulfill their constitutional mission and to deliver justice in a manner that reflects the full measure of New York's commitment to a just society under the rule of law.

## **The Excellence Initiative**



At her investiture as New York's new Chief Judge in February 2016, Janet DiFiore announced, as her highest priority, the Excellence Initiative – a comprehensive and critical evaluation of court operations and administration at every level, toward the goal of “operational and decisional excellence in everything that we do.” The Excellence Initiative represents a renewed focus on the core mission of the Judiciary – to fairly and promptly adjudicate each of the millions of cases filed in the New York State courts every year.

### Eliminating Delay

The initial focus of the Excellence Initiative has been the elimination of delays, which in themselves far too often constitute a denial of justice. We began by consulting closely with local court administrators, the bar, prosecutors and other partners in the justice community, to understand the root causes of the backlogs, bottlenecks and delays in adjudicating cases. Working closely with our Administrative Judges and Supervising Judges throughout the state, we then designed and implemented 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 and circumstances of individual courts.

These efforts were aided by the development of new data tools that allow us to analyze the court system's vast caseload, in real time, to identify and address problems earlier and with greater precision. These tools also allow the development of objective metrics and standards, and permit swifter intervention and assessment of success and deficiency.

Real progress has been made in the early phases of the Excellence Initiative, as shown by these examples: