

Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission

State Report 2014-15

The Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission makes recommendations and develops strategies to make the court system more responsive to the issues of court employees of color, litigants and the larger legal community and to implement recommendations to address those issues. The Commission also sponsors seminars and meets with administrators in an effort to increase diversity within the judiciary and the legal profession.

Statewide seminars on “Everything You Need to Know About Becoming a Judge”

The Commission hosted seminars through-out New York State to increase diversity on the bench. The seminars entitled “Everything You Need to Know About Becoming a Judge” were presented in Rochester, Buffalo, and Albany, New York with a fourth seminar being planned for Syracuse, New York. The Commission co-sponsored the seminars with local bar associations, local law schools and leaders on the bench in each district.

The seminars included panel discussions on election law and ethics, securing the nomination in State Supreme Court, making the ballot in city, county and family court, and the appointive process to the New York State Court of Claims, and federal bench. The panelists included local Commissioners from the Board of Elections, the leaders of local political parties, bar leaders, and local state and federal jurists. The seminars were well attended and closed with a reception for further networking for potential judicial candidates.

Implicit Bias Training

The Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission received a grant from the National Center for State Courts which enabled the Commission to provide implicit bias training for administrative and supervisory judges throughout the state.

The Commission also continued its annual class for new judges at the New York State Judicial Institute on implicit bias and cultural sensitivity in the courtroom. The Commission's Cultural Awareness Booklet was also distributed to the new judges.

Diversity Efforts

The Commission continued to meet with leaders and administrators within the court to discuss diversity efforts within their district.

We also continued to make available judicial mentors for attorneys who have completed their judicial application for positions within Family and Criminal courts.

For more information about the Commission, visit www.nycourts.gov/ip/ethnic-fairness/