

# REPORT OF THE NEW JERSEY JUDICIARY TO THE NATIONAL CONSORTIUM ON RACIAL AND ETHNIC FAIRNESS IN THE COURTS

Chief Justice Stuart Rabner Acting Administrative Director of the Courts Glenn A. Grant, J.A.D.

# **Introduction/Overview**

The need to be continually and consistently engaged in the elimination of bias is integral to all aspects of judicial administration. The <u>New Jersey Judiciary</u>, one of the four founding members of the National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts ("the National Consortium"), continues its multidecade direct commitment to eliminating the vestiges of bias in all its forms in the administration of justice and the practice of law.

This report shares outcomes from recent institutional initiatives undertaken to remediate identified systemic disparities in outcomes and inequities in the ability of particular community constituencies to access courts. In particular, this report highlights the <a href="New Jersey Supreme Court's July 16">New Jersey Supreme Court's July 16</a>, 2020 Action Plan on Ensuring Equal Justice; the recent work of the Supreme Court Committee on <a href="Diversity">Diversity</a>, <a href="Inclusion">Inclusion</a>, and <a href="Community Engagement">Community Engagement</a> including the <a href="2019-2021 report">2019-2021 report</a> and recommendations; education, training, and professional development programming; and community engagement initiatives. In addition, the report provides updates regarding several ongoing related justice systems reforms.

### I. Supreme Court Action Plan on Ensuring Equal Justice

The Supreme Court on June 5, 2020 issued <u>a public statement</u> recommitting the Judiciary to the elimination of barriers to equal justice, including those arising from systemic racism and disparities in access and outcomes. Building on that statement, the Court on July 16, 2020 issued an <u>Action Plan for Ensuring Equal Justice</u>, which outlines a series of short-term initiatives that the Judiciary sought to accomplish within a year, as well as important areas of ongoing commitment.

The Court's Action Plan outlines nine key areas that the Judiciary committed to address within one year. It also chronicles the Judiciary's history of confronting race-based disparities in the courts, including its role as a co-founder of the National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts, and critical reform efforts focused on the Municipal Courts, Criminal Justice Reform (CJR), Juvenile Justice, Children in Court, and Probation. In addition to Judiciary-led initiatives, the Action Plan delineates key areas of collaboration with and support for legislative reform.

The Court's July 16, 2020 Action Plan focuses on policies and operational protocols designed to enable access for communities that historically experience barriers to justice, including people of color. The following is an overview of the nine initiatives, with notes as to the steps taken to date in advancing these efforts:

### (1) supporting juror impartiality;

The Action Plan states "[t]he Judiciary will work to implement policies and protocols to support juror impartiality, including: (a) expanded juror orientation content regarding implicit and explicit bias; (b) model jury charges on impartiality and implicit bias; (c) new and revised mandatory model jury selection questions on recognizing and counteracting bias in the jury process; and (d) examining options for changes to the Court Rules relating to impartiality in the juror selection process. Internally and in collaboration with stakeholders, [the Judiciary] also will respond to the results of the "Peremptory Challenge Impact Study," a forthcoming analysis by external experts of the effects of the exercise of peremptory challenges on the racial composition of jury venires and seated juries."

While efforts regarding several aspects of this action item continue, by <u>February 2, 2021 Notice to the Bar</u>, the Judiciary requested public comment on initial recommendations for enhanced jury selection questions and additions to the model jury charges to support juror impartiality and reduce the effects of implicit bias.

### (2) reducing timeframes for post-dispositional supervision;

The Court in December 2020 approved a framework for standardized statewide review of certain adults and juveniles subject to probation supervision. As announced in the <u>February 3, 2021 press release</u>, Superior Court judges ordered early termination of probation supervision for more than 500 individuals who met specific criteria, either by discharging entirely or by converting cases to collections only, thereby ensuring that these members of our communities were not burdened by ongoing court involvement beyond its rehabilitative purpose.

# (3) supporting juvenile rehabilitation;

The Court on October 20, 2020 vacated all outstanding discretionary juvenile fines (more than \$140,000 statewide), and open failure to appear juvenile warrants issued more than five years ago for non-violent 4<sup>th</sup> degree or lesser charges, and established a process for local courts to annually dismiss such warrants.

# (4) requiring anti-bias continuing legal education (CLE);

The Court in its <u>October 20, 2020 Order</u> adopted amendments to the Continuing Legal Education ("CLE") requirements, effective January 1, 2021, so as to require all judges and attorneys to complete two hours (in each two-year reporting cycle) of coursework in diversity, inclusion, and elimination of bias, as part of an expanded five-hour requirement for ethics and professionalism.

Following through on the Court's promise to support fulfillment of these new requirements, the Judiciary on January 21, 2021 announced registration information for a year-long series of free virtual CLE courses on the elimination of bias. The current calendar includes a monthly presentation of "Tools for Advancing Equity: Engaging in the Elimination of Bias." This program examines the histories and dynamics of structural, explicit, and implicit biases; explores the relationship among implicit associations, implicit assumptions, and implicit bias in thought processes and decision-making; identifies microaggressions common in professional legal settings; and provides additional tools and resources for individual jurists and practitioners to include in their respective ongoing efforts to eliminate the effects of bias in the administration of justice and the practice of law.

Offered via Zoom Webinar, this interactive experiential workshop thus far has been presented through this CLE initiative to approximately 3,000 judges and attorneys across a diverse array of professional contexts. Participants in these monthly programs include judges and attorneys licensed in New Jersey who practice across the 50 states and the District of Columbia and at all levels of the public sector and in different private sector settings. Additional topical diversity and inclusion programs will be added throughout the course of the year.

The Court's amendments to <u>Rule</u> 1:42 prompted reexamination of other educational requirements, as reflected in a pending proposal to require diversity, inclusion, and elimination of bias training for municipal court administrators, deputy administrators, and directors, and in the recent addition of implicit bias training for Family Part and Civil Mediators.

# (5) using technology to improve opportunities for all persons to access expungement resources;

The legislature enacted the clean slate law, which includes a provision that the Judiciary provide an electronic filing system for expungement applications, including electronic notification to all law enforcement agencies. The Court in its <u>December 8, 2020 Order</u> relaxed the Court Rules to implement expungement efiling, as required by N.J.S.A. 2C:52-10.1. The Judiciary in February 2021 announced outreach efforts to raise awareness of expanded expungement resources and to facilitate use of this critical new opportunity.

New Jersey expungement laws were recently amended, reducing waiting periods and expanding the types of offenses eligible for expungement. The <u>Judiciary's new e-Courts expungement system</u> makes the process less complicated, allowing attorneys and self-represented litigants to file petitions for expungement online.

The Administrative Office of the Courts conducted an initial stakeholder outreach session on February 4, 2021, and additional outreach events are underway statewide.

Efforts also are underway to advance the Court's commitment to the remaining items enumerated in its Action Plan:

- (6) enabling alternative methods of resolving Municipal Court matters;
  - (a) Municipal Case Resolution System. As part of its continuing efforts to provide quality service to the public, the Judiciary developed and implemented the Municipal Case Resolution system (MCR). This online system allows court users to electronically reach out to the municipal prosecutor to help resolve certain traffic offenses remotely and eliminate the need to appear in-person at a municipal court session. Rolled out statewide in July 2020, more than 15,000 defendants have utilized this online system to initiate a plea agreement with the municipal prosecutor to revolve their case.
  - (b) Plea by Mail. Since the start of COVID, tens of thousands of municipal court defendants have had their matters resolved remotely using the Judiciary's plea by mail form, which enables defendants to resolve their matters without having to appear at a hearing. The increased use of this form was made possible by way of the Supreme Court relaxing the Rules of Court to reduce the restrictions for its use. Moreover, efforts are currently underway to create an online process for submitting the "plea by mail" form.
  - (c) Statewide Violations Bureau Schedule. The Statewide Violations Bureau Schedule lists matters for which defendants may elect to plead guilty without having to come to court to do so. Matters not listed on the schedule require a court appearance (in-person or virtual). In Spring 2020, the Acting Administrative Director expanded the Schedule by adding more than 400 new matters, further making it easier for defendants to resolve their matters without coming to court.
  - (d) Expansion of the NJMCdirect.com website. The state Judiciary's NJMCdirect website enables defendants to make their municipal court payments online. More than half of all monies collected by municipal courts are paid through this online site. Significant changes were made to the site during 2020 to increase use, including allowing non-traffic/parking matters to be paid through the site and expanding the ability for defendants to satisfy their financial obligation by paying monthly installments through the site.

### (7) broadening language access resources;

The Judiciary's Language Services Section has expanded and improved services during the COVID-19 pandemic, including to add simultaneous interpreting (in addition to the consecutive mode) so as to maximize the efficiency of remote proceedings. The Judiciary also looks forward to unveiling additional resources for individuals who require interpreting services in indigenous languages.

### (8) reexamining access to misused court records; and

This September 16, 2020 <u>notice to the bar</u> solicited public comment on proposed amendments to Rule 1:38 (" Court Records Excluded from Public Access") so as to remove from public access two categories of records in landlord/tenant matters: (1) those never generating a judgment for possession, or (2) those where a judgment for possession was subsequently dismissed. Pending legislative developments may affect this proposal, which remains under review by the Court.

### (9) improving the landlord/tenant process.

In the landlord/tenant area, the Court and Judiciary have made tremendous strides over the past year, including but not limited to establishing processes for pretrial/settlement conferences; conducting virtual outreach events with stakeholders to share information and resources for both tenants and landlords; and, pursuant to the Court's October 20, 2020 Order, providing an incentive for attorneys to provide pro bono representation to qualifying parties in landlord/tenant matters. The Judiciary continues to commit additional resources to ensure that processes are sound, landlords and tenants receive more information directly from the court, and litigants have opportunities to connect with court staff throughout the process.

In March 2021, Chief Justice Stuart Rabner established the Special Committee on Landlord Tenant to reimagine all aspects of the landlord tenant process in New Jersey. Acting Administrative Director of the Courts Glenn A. Grant served as chair of the Special Committee, with Burlington Vicinage Assignment Judge Jeanne T. Covert as vice-chair. The Special Committee brought together tenant advocates, landlord representatives, judges, and court staff, to share diverse perspectives and new ideas to address urgent needs and to build the foundation for lasting improvements.

By design, the Special Committee included dedicated advocates for individuals who rent their homes, including in areas of the state in which housing challenges existed even before COVID-19. It involved attorneys who represent corporate landlords as well as smaller landlords for whom the extended eviction moratorium threatens severe economic consequences. The potential fallout of

this crisis could also have devastating long-term consequences for the stability of many New Jersey communities for years to come without some mitigation. Key associations, including Legal Services of New Jersey, the New Jersey State Bar Association, the New Jersey Apartment Association, and a group of housing advocates, designated members to represent the interests of all parties in landlord tenant proceedings. Judges and vicinage and central office court staff with expertise in landlord tenant also provided insights on case management and court processes, including electronic filing systems and technological supports.

The Special Committee collaborated to review and refine a number of preliminary proposals. The <u>Special Committee's Report</u> was published on April 21, 2021 for public comment and includes a number of recommendations to the Supreme Court to improve landlord tenant processes not only during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic but beyond. Those recommendations address all phases of landlord tenant events: Filing; Before Trial; Trial and Judgment; and Post Judgment, followed by Ongoing Reforms. The form of the recommendations include a combination of proposed amendments to Court Rules, new and revised court forms, new and improved court processes, and recommended informational materials.

Each of the highlighted steps advances the Court's goal of improving equity and justice. These actions correspond to the key areas of focus specified in the Action Plan, but not to the exclusion of other continuing initiatives designed to facilitate access to the courts. The Court continues to champion additional efforts in the areas of access and fairness, juvenile rehabilitation, elimination of bias, and all areas as listed in the Action Plan. At the same time, the Court already is expanding its initial blueprint to add new areas of focus and new ways to enhance ongoing initiatives.

# II. Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement Program

The Supreme Court Committee on Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement continues to build on the New Jersey Judiciary's tradition of systemic advancement, data-informed recommendations for structural and operational improvements, and innovative proactive approaches to ensuring the equitable and bias-free administration of justice. Known since its inception in 1993 as the Supreme Court Committee on Minority Concerns, the Committee was renamed and received an updated charge from the Court, effective September 1, 2019, in recognition of the continuing importance of its mission and the expanding scope of its reach.<sup>1</sup>

6

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The New Jersey Supreme Court established the Committee on Minority Concerns as a standing committee in 1993 to implement the recommendations of the Supreme Court Task Force on Minority Concerns.

"The renaming and updated charge reflect the Court's recognition that the Committee's focus ha[d] expanded beyond [narrowly-constructed race and ethnicity categories] and ... current[ly] ha[s] grown to encompass religious, social, cultural and economic non-majority groups and addresses access to justice issues relating to sexual orientation and gender identity," employing an intersectional lens of analysis to its work where applicable. (July 18, 2019 Advisory Letter of the Administrative Director of the Courts to the Committee Chair)

The updated charge reflects the contemporary contexts in which the Committee addresses systemic barriers to justice, structural bias, and the historic vestiges of exclusion and marginalization relating to race, ethnicity, poverty, and other aspects of identity and experience. In this context, the Committee works:

- to assess the availability of court services and supports (including for self-represented litigants) in relation to racial, ethnic, religious, social, economic, sexual orientation, gender identity, and cultural inclusion;
- in consultation with Judiciary practice divisions, with non-Judiciary partners, and with others to address specific issues as well as those that exceed the scope of any individual practice division, to develop policy recommendations to improve and/or supplement existing operational protocols;
- to facilitate public outreach in areas including court access and fairness, job recruitment (for all racial, ethnic, religious, social, economic, and cultural groups), Criminal Justice Reform, and Municipal Court Reform;
- to serve as a liaison between the Judiciary and community organizations as requested by the Supreme Court or the Administrative Director; and
- to respond to questions posed by the Supreme Court as well as ongoing areas of interest and present study proposals for review and endorsement by the Administrative Director and the Court.

The updated charge both supplements and extends the Committee's longstanding mission.<sup>2</sup>

The 2019-2021 term has been a full and engaging term, and the 2019-2021 biennial report is the first report of the Committee since receiving its updated name and charge. The unprecedented challenges facing the Court due to the COVID-19 pandemic presented additional opportunities for the Committee to contribute to the Judiciary's efforts to address access to the courts concerns in the context of pandemic-necessitated operational modifications. The dual crises of COVID-19 and the murder of George Floyd and other racially-motivated acts of violence and bias shaped the Committee's work this term and informed its recommendations.

The 2019-2021 report, currently pending consideration by the Court, summarizes key aspects of the Committee's current undertakings under six thematic headings resulting in twelve substantive recommendations. Ten of the recommendations are programmatic in nature, and two of the recommendations suggest rules changes that further advance procedural fairness and consistency in name change matters for adults and children.

#### III. Education, Training, and Professional Development

The Court has long recognized the value of training, education, and professional development. Twelve of the original fifty-three court-approved Minority Concerns recommendations considered some aspect of these topics. Today, training, education, and professional development remain essential tools for realizing and sustaining institutional change and the elimination of structural bias and barriers to justice through the courts.

The Judiciary's coordinated training, education, and professional development efforts focus on both internal and external constituencies including: (1) judges, (2) leadership/management and non-managerial staff, (3) court volunteers, (4) law clerks, (4) students, (5) external stakeholders (including by providing continuing

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The Committee's original charge included assuring permanent oversight and coordination of Court-approved initiatives; enhancing competency and awareness of court personnel on issues regarding equal access and treatment; assuring public accountability and responsibility; heightening public understanding of and access to the judicial system; increasing minority representation in various areas; and interfacing with other branches of government.

legal education), (6) litigant education (such as the procedural workshops the Ombudsmen offer), and (7) the general community.<sup>3</sup> In the context of Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement, these efforts also include education/information sharing with committee members and community partners and the periodic provision of qualifying continuing legal education programs in partnership with the Vicinage Advisory Committees on Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement.

In the context of the updated Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement charge, the Committee has supported education and training that promotes the equitable and bias-free administration of justice through the state and municipal courts. The Committee recognizes the expansion of specific judicial education training initiatives designed to enhance individual and organizational capacity to ensure the vestiges of structural bias and the effects of implicit bias do not shape judicial decision-making or the delivery of court programs and services.

The Court demonstrated decisive leadership in the issuance of Directive #14-19, which established the "Judiciary Enhanced Education and Training Initiative" with a focus on "the enhancement of existing training for judges in the areas of sexual assault, domestic violence, implicit bias, and diversity." The first programs under this initiative were the Gender Violence and Bias Summit ("the Summit") for state court judges that took place on October 28, 2019 and the session for municipal court judges on December 9, 2019. The Summits included a full day training with presentations on implicit bias, effective communication for judges to avoid actual and perceived bias on the bench, understanding gender violence, the neurobiology of trauma and its implications for the courts, the intersection of descriptive language and sexual violence, and interactive facilitated sessions where judges could synthesize and discuss the issues raised during the day. The positive impact of the courts recessing for these days to engage statewide in these critically important issues speaks volumes as to the depth of the institutional commitment to equity and procedural fairness in the administration of justice. These summits will continue on a biennial basis.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Judicial Education and Performance, Organizational Development and Training, EEO/AA, JISA (the Judiciary Institute for Staff Attorneys), and Volunteer Services play central roles in the delivery of education, training, and professional development in addition to the related work of Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement program staff.

The return on investment in <u>judicial education</u> is incalculable. The continuing expansion of programming in key areas of diversity, inclusion, and elimination of bias is an essential supplement to the catalogue of core Judicial Education programs. Similar attention to education, training, and professional development for staff continues through the Organizational Training and Development Unit, EEO/AA Unit, and Judiciary Institute for Staff Attorneys ("JISA"). Programming in these areas supports professional growth, advances institutional values, and expands individual and organizational capacity to engage in the elimination of bias.

## IV. Community Engagement

Public education, community outreach, and community engagement are central to fostering public trust in the courts and ensuring that the community is informed about its courts and has opportunity to share its concerns and challenges with the courts.

The statewide Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement Program and the Ombudsman (Community Liaison) Program in each of the fifteen vicinages (court districts) play a central role in continuing to deliver <u>public education</u>, <u>community outreach</u>, <u>and community engagement programs now in a virtual format</u>. These programs range from procedural information seminars on topics such as expungements of criminal records and motions to modify child support, to community listening sessions, where court staff provide updates regarding current court operations and the status of ongoing justice systems reforms and attendees have the opportunity to ask questions, raise access to the courts concerns, and share suggestions for ways to strengthen the court-community partnership.

The community engagement aspect of the New Jersey Judiciary's Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement models has three key elements: (1) the involvement of the general community including people outside the legal profession in the membership of the Supreme Court Committee and Vicinage Advisory Committees on Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement; (2) the role that the Vicinage Advisory Committees on Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement play in facilitating engagement with local communities; and (3) the role of program staff as a face of the courts in the community, serving as a conduit not only for providing information to the public and external stakeholder and justice system partners but also for bringing the community's needs, concerns, and ideas to the Court.

In June 2020, a statewide summit on access to the courts was held. This first ever statewide Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement meeting included the chairs, coordinators, and membership of all fifteen Vicinage Advisory Committees on Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement. Coordinated by the Central Office Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement staff in collaboration with with the Chair of the Conference of Vicinage Advisory Committee on Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement Chairs and the Committee of Vicinage Advisory Committee on Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement Coordinators Working Group on Community Engagement and Virtual Programming, the event included over 200 attendees. Many assignment judges and trial court administrators also attended. To maximize input from the attendees, discussion prompts were used so attendees could provide feedback through a chat feature.

This approach was highly successful and provided a general framework for subsequent virtual programming such as the <u>statewide Landlord/Tenant Community Resources Seminar Series</u> co-coordinated by Communications and Community Relations (Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement and Litigant Services) and Trial Court Services (Civil Practice) with assistance from Central Office and vicinage IT staff. These efforts will be expanded during calendar year 2021 with a re-envisioned general community CJR outreach presented in a facilitated community conversation series designed to facilitate access to the courts and engagement with the community, modifying the approach taken by the Massachusetts Trial Courts for similar programming efforts.

# V. Ongoing Justice Systems Reforms and Related Initiatives

# **Sustaining Access to Justice throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic**

While the scope of this report precludes a comprehensive discussion of the Court's continuing efforts to ensure access to the courts during the continuing public health emergency, acknowledgement of the holistic approach to ensuring access to the courts is appropriate to this overview. The New Jersey Judiciary faced the unprecedented challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic proactively, decisively, and comprehensively. Never losing sight of the vulnerability faced by numerous constituencies within the community at large, the New Jersey Judiciary continues to ensure access to the courts including for people impacted directly by the access to technology gap, also known as "The Digital Divide."

Addressing a message to the New Jersey Judiciary on the one year anniversary of the COVID-19 pandemic, Chief Justice Rabner memorialized numerous ways in which the New Jersey Courts both meet the challenges unique to the pandemic and continue to advance institutional initiatives to ensure equitable access to the courts for all justice system stakeholders.

#### **Continuing to Support the Mission of the National Consortium**

As a co-founder of the National Consortium, the New Jersey Judiciary continues to play an active role in this work at the national level in a number of ways. A significant aspect of the New Jersey Judiciary's commitment to the Consortium's mission is the hosting and production of the national conference and annual meeting every ten years. Having hosted the national event in 1990, 2000, and 2010, plans were well underway when the circumstances of the global COVID-19 pandemic necessitated cancelling the May 2020 conference and annual meeting. Committed to presenting central aspects of the anticipated program at a future moment in time, the New Jersey Judiciary presented with the National Consortium a joint Black History Month programming on wrongful convictions featuring Kevin Richardson of the Exonerated Five and Jarrett Adams, Esq.

The joint Black History Month Program, which was held via Zoom Webinar and included 664 attendees from across the United States, met the objective of hosting a Black History Month Program that recognized the challenges and achievements of contemporary Black role models by increasing awareness of the reality of wrongful convictions and the ways wrongful convictions impact individuals, families, and the community at large.

# **Mass Dismissals of Aged Municipal Court Matters**

As recommended by the Working Group on Municipal Courts, the Supreme Court in its January 17, 2019 Order dismissed 787,764 unresolved complaints on minor municipal court matters dating from before January 1, 2003. In addition to dismissal, the Order recalled any associated open warrants for failures to appear and rescinded any court-ordered driver's license suspensions. The Judiciary has developed an automated process to address this issue on an ongoing basis so that defendants with minor matters older than 10 years will not continue to face barriers to full integration in society.

#### **Access and Fairness Initiative**

The <u>Supreme Court Advisory Committee on Access and Fairness</u> includes a diverse array of internal and external stakeholders, both legal and non-legal, who provide critical perspectives regarding the effects of court operations with a focus on litigant perspectives and experiences, including people of color, poor people, individuals with differing abilities, and in particular self-represented litigants. The Advisory Committee works closely with the Supreme Court's standing committees, including the Committee on Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement. Both groups engage in ongoing community-based efforts to sustain access for all court users.

# **Ensuring Equal Access to the Courts for LGBTQ+ Court Users**

During the 2019-2021 timeframe, the New Jersey Judiciary advanced several initiatives that promote access to the courts for LGBTQ+ justice system stakeholders and eliminate procedural barriers in particular for transgender, gender non-conforming and non-binary people interfacing with the New Jersey Courts. In sum, these include:

- (1) approval of a policy allowing judges and staff on a voluntary basis to include their pronouns in their email signatures;
- (2) <u>elimination of the newspaper publication requirement for both adult and</u> children's name changes; and
- (3) continuing model inclusive courtroom practice training programs for judges and staff at all levels of court and in all practice areas.

# **Conclusion**

The administration of justice cannot be complete without simultaneously ensuring the absence of bias and the elimination of barriers to the courts. The New Jersey Judiciary remains steadfast in its long-term institutional commitment to this work and centers these efforts in its daily operations. While this report chronicles robust systemic reforms, operational improvements, and procedural refinements, much work remains to be done locally, regionally, and nationally. Working in collaboration at each of these levels, the New Jersey Judiciary continues to lead significant justice system reforms and access to the courts initiatives in the context of valuing diversity, supporting inclusion, and engaging in the elimination of bias in all its forms.

\*\*

For further information on the contents of this Report and other related programs and initiatives, contact Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement Program Coordinator Lisa Burke at <a href="mailto:lisa.burke@njcourts.gov">lisa.burke@njcourts.gov</a>.

