



NEWS RELEASE

**New York State
Unified Court System**

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

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Midtown Community Justice Center Continues to Expand Its Operations

MANHATTAN—Chief Administrative Judge Joseph A. Zayas and First Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Norman St. George today announced that Desk Appearance Tickets (DATs) issued to adults ages 26 and older for certain qualifying offenses committed within one of six Midtown precincts in Manhattan, as well as summonses issued in Manhattan for certain qualifying charges, will be made returnable to the Midtown Community Justice Center (MCJC). The court, which is located at 314 West 54 Street in Manhattan and has been operating on Thursdays and Fridays, will now be open on Wednesdays to accommodate the newly expanded calendar. Today's launch of the MCJC's Wednesday calendar is an interim step as the court moves toward the implementation of a five-day weekly calendar in the coming months.

Starting today, adults 26 and older issued DATs for certain qualifying offenses in Manhattan's 10th, 13th, 14th, 17th, 18th, and 20th Precincts will be arraigned at the MCJC; and summonses issued in Manhattan for any Pedicab violation or VTL Section 1212 (reckless driving) offense will appear before the MCJC, where Judge John Zhuo Wang presides. The Legal Aid Society will represent eligible defendants issued DATs; 18B attorneys will be assigned to handle all eligible defendants issued summonses.

Additionally, Judges Zayas and St. George announced that, effective October 2, 2024, DATs issued to adults 26 and older for Petit Larceny, Criminal Possession of Stolen Property-5th Degree, and Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance-7th Degree—if the offense was committed within Manhattan's 25th Precinct's 125th Street corridor—will be arraigned on Wednesdays at the MCJC, with eligible defendants to be represented by the Legal Aid Society.

“The Midtown Community Justice Center is a long-established neighborhood fixture that for more than three decades has provided critical programs and services to address the root causes of crime, putting justice-involved individuals on the right path and enhancing the safety and overall quality of life for those who live in, work in, and visit the areas of Manhattan served by the court,” said Chief Administrative Judge Zayas. “I am both pleased and excited to announce today’s launch of the MCJC’s Wednesday calendar and thankful to Chief Judge Rowan Wilson for his championship of the Justice Center’s work, and to the Center for Justice Innovation and the court’s many other justice partners and stakeholders, including District Attorney Alvin Bragg, the defense bar, and Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal, for their support in the implementation of the additional calendar. I look forward to the MCJC’s ongoing expansion of operations and initiatives.”

“The MCJC’s long record of success clearly demonstrates the vital role of compassionate, problem-solving justice approaches in improving community safety and fostering public trust in our state courts. I couldn’t be more delighted about the MCJC’s newly expanded capacity, which will serve to boost the quality of life for thousands upon thousands of Manhattan residents and visitors while helping ensure better case outcomes for the many at-risk individuals who appear before the court,” said First Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Norman St. George. “I commend Judge Wang and the MCJC staff for their efforts in the MCJC’s ongoing expansion and for their commitment to the Justice Center’s important work.”

"The reopening of the Midtown Community Justice Center for a third day a week is great news for everyone. The Justice Center is a resource for the entire community, providing a wide range of resources and solutions for those in the justice system and outside it, including anyone who seeks support from our social workers and other staff voluntarily. With the court already busy two days a week providing alternatives to incarceration for emerging adults and people with mental illness, a third day will allow the court to invest in even more collaborations with the community around public safety and community justice concerns for the midtown Manhattan neighborhood, select cases from the 125th Street area further north, and summonses involving from all of Manhattan. The Center for Justice Innovation is grateful to Chief Judge Rowan Wilson for his steadfast commitment to fully reopening the courtroom, and everyone who helped make the expansion of the court’s schedule possible, including Presiding Judge John Zhuo Wang, State Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal, former Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Deborah Kaplan, Administrative Judge for New York City Criminal Court Tamiko Amaker, and Supervising Judge for New York City Criminal Court-New York County Kevin McGrath," said Courtney Bryan, Executive Director of the Center for Justice Innovation.

“By increasing capacity and adding an additional court calendar day, Midtown Community Justice Center will make us all safer—offering more programs and services that will help to reduce unnecessary incarceration and promote accountability, deterrence, and public safety. This expansion is the result of close collaboration and hard work, and we are grateful to our partners at OCA, CJI, the NYPD, and the defense bar for helping to make this a reality,” said Manhattan District Attorney Alvin L. Bragg Jr.

“I’m thrilled that the Midtown Community Justice Center will now be open on Wednesdays, expanding their service to three days a week. Restoring service at the Midtown Community Justice Center, which I have been advocating for for months, is a major win for our community and for justice in New York City. Without a fully functional Midtown Community Justice Center, we’re fighting quality of life crimes and recidivism with one hand tied behind our back,” said Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal. “I’m elated that our efforts paid off and MCJC is becoming more accessible and is on its way to becoming fully operational five days a week, as was initially intended. I thank Chief Administrative Judge Zayas, District Attorney Bragg, the Center for Justice Innovation, and the Legal Aid Society, along with my colleagues Congressman Nadler, Borough President Levine, Assembly Members Rosenthal and Simone, Council Members Brewer and Bottcher, for collaborating on this important issue.”

As one of the nation’s premier community courts, the MCJC (formerly the Midtown Community Court)—a project of the Unified Court System and the Center for Justice Innovation—has been addressing quality of life issues since 1993. Community courts respond creatively to low-level offending, looking to the underlying causes of criminal behavior to help break the cycle of crime. Focusing on local concerns, these problem-solving courts rely on the partnerships of criminal justice agencies, area residents, civic organizations, government entities, social service providers, and other stakeholders.

Over the past three decades, the MCJC’s scope of services has expanded to include street outreach for unhoused individuals as well as community engagement initiatives. The MCJC also continues to build on its post-pandemic operational capacity. Among such efforts, the mid-Manhattan court launched a Misdemeanor Mental Health Part two years ago aimed at low-level offenders living with a serious mental illness related to their criminal justice involvement and, more recently, implemented a borough-wide arraignment calendar for DATs issued to emerging adults, ages 18 through 25, in Manhattan.

For more information about New York’s community courts, go to:
https://ww2.nycourts.gov/courts/problem_solving/cc/home.shtml.

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