

GLENN A. GRANT, J.A.D.
Acting Administrative Director of the Courts

Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex • P.O. Box 037 • Trenton, NJ 08625-0037 njcourts.gov • Tel: 609-376-3000 • Fax: 609-376-3002

**TO: Hon. Carmen Messano, P.J.A.D.
Assignment Judges
Hon. Mala Sundar, P.J.T.C.**

Directive #09-21

[Questions or comments may be directed to
Communications and Community
Relations at (609) 815-2900 x52363]

FROM: Glenn A. Grant, J.A.D. 

**SUBJ: Judiciary Staff Authority to Assist Court Users in Completing and
Submitting Judiciary Forms**

DATE: April 22, 2021

The New Jersey Judiciary is committed to supporting meaningful access and participation for all court users, including self-represented litigants, individuals with disabilities, and individuals with language access needs. This directive formalizes the practice of designated and trained Judiciary staff providing non-legal assistance to court users who are seeking to complete and file Judiciary forms.

The expectation and established practice is that most court users can complete and file Judiciary forms without assistance. In limited circumstances, however, including but not limited to court users unable to read or write, individuals with disabilities, and those with language access needs, non-legal assistance in completing forms may be necessary and appropriate. Assistance to court users shall be provided, where needed and reasonable, based on various factors, including staff availability, the relative urgency of the situation, and whether the court user can obtain help through alternative means.

Therefore, Judiciary staff can provide non-legal assistance to court users in completing and submitting forms, as follows:

- Designated Judiciary staff may provide clerical and technical assistance to court users, including self-represented litigants, to complete **Judiciary-approved forms** (both paper and electronic).
- Such approved clerical and technical assistance includes typing and transcribing content conveyed by the court user. Consistent with this policy, court forms prepared on behalf of the court user will be transmitted directly to the appropriate division for the processing of fees and uploading into a Judiciary electronic filing system as needed.

- Consistent with Directive #01-17 (“Judiciary Language Access Plan”), the same level of assistance that would be provided to an English fluent court user will be provided to court users who are Limited English Proficient (LEP) or deaf or hard of hearing.
- Consistent with the Judiciary’s Title II ADA Procedures for Access to the Courts By Individuals with Disabilities, the Judiciary will provide a reasonable accommodation for a court user with a disability, enabling the individual to access and participate in court proceedings, programs, services and activities, provided that the accommodation does not fundamentally alter the nature of a Judiciary program, service or activity or impose an undue hardship upon the Judiciary.
- Judiciary staff who provide authorized clerical and technical assistance are providing services within the scope of their Judiciary work duties.

Consistent with this policy, Judiciary staff may not provide legal assistance, advice, or representation to court users. Rather, where legal help is necessary, the Judiciary will inform court users of the availability of legal resources.

Questions on this Directive may be directed to the Office of Communications and Community Relations at (609) 815-2900 x52363.

cc: Chief Justice Stuart Rabner
Steven D. Bonville, Chief of Staff
AOC Directors and Assistant Directors
Trial Court Administrators
Clerks of Court
Meryl Nadler, Counsel to the Administrative Director
Special Assistants to the Administrative Director
Janie Rodriguez, Chief, Outreach and Litigant Services
Jennifer Weatherby-Morris, Chief, Programs and Procedures
Brenda Carrasquillo, Manager, Language Services
Vicinage Ombudsmen