

SUPREME COURT OF NEW JERSEY ACTION PLAN FOR EQUAL JUSTICE – 2025 UPDATE AND NEW INITIATIVES

As part of its ongoing commitment to remove barriers and enhance fairness, the New Jersey Supreme Court provides this update on recent initiatives along with new areas of focus for 2025.

Update on 2024 Initiatives

- **Medical Debt:**

Enabled by prior revisions to the Civil Case Information Statement, the Judiciary is collecting data on consumer debt cases involving medical debt and reviewing statistics regarding those filings, which total more than 38,000 since December 2023. In addition, the Judiciary also has updated its website to [link](#) to new public resources, including materials developed by public interest groups to help individuals understand and address medical debt, empowering more informed engagement in the court process.

- **Drug Enforcement and Demand Reduction (DEDR) Penalties:**

On [May 8, 2025](#), the Court ordered a reduction of DEDR penalties for 305 individuals who successfully completed court-ordered drug treatment or counseling and had their cases expunged. Implemented after notice to prosecutors, this action and ongoing practice reduces unnecessary legal obstacles and supports successful reintegration for people who have satisfied statutory requirements.

- **Affordable Housing:**

The Affordable Housing Dispute Resolution Program continues to review and mediate challenges to municipal housing obligations and fair share plans submitted to it for the 4th Round, pursuant to P.L. 2024, c.2. Pursuant to the requirements set forth in P.L. 2024, c.2, the Judiciary is maintaining an [online repository](#) of municipal resolutions, housing element and fair share plans, compliance certification orders and implementing ordinances.

Areas of Focus for 2025

1. Discretionary Financial Assessments and Court-Imposed Obligations:

The Court will review the imposition of discretionary fees, especially where a defendant's inability to pay has been established, to avoid undue hardship and help ensure compliance with and timely completion of court obligations.

2. Administrative Closure of Aged Juvenile Deferred Dispositions:

The Court will consider vacating certain juvenile cases that have remained open for more than five years after being referred for diversion or deferred disposition (such as Juvenile Conference Committees), easing unnecessary lingering consequences for old non-violent offenses.

3. Disability Inactive Status for Attorneys -- Fee Review (Court Rule 1:20-12):

Consistent with ongoing efforts by the Office of Attorney Ethics and the Supreme Court Committee on Wellness in the Law, the Court will consider reducing or eliminating the \$2,000 fee currently required by Court Rule 1:20-12 for attorneys seeking disability inactive status, with the goal of reducing or eliminating financial barriers for those needing to step away from practice for health and well-being reasons.

Through these specific actions, as well as ongoing daily work by judges and staff at all levels, the Court reaffirms its dedication to ensuring justice and equal access for all people. Further information on the Court's Action Plans is available on the Judiciary [website](#).