

Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings

Mission and Commitment

The City of New York's Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH) is the City's central, independent, administrative law tribunal. OATH's mission is to ensure that everyone who appears at OATH receives access to justice, a fair opportunity to be heard, and a timely resolution of their case.

We are committed to ensuring OATH's staff treat all parties fairly and impartially, that all OATH adjudicators conduct themselves ethically and with the utmost level of professionalism, that OATH continually promotes access to justice for all, that OATH strives for the highest standards with respect to hiring, workforce development, contracting, and other internal practices, and that OATH makes information available to all parties, regardless of status, so that everyone has a full and fair opportunity to be heard when they attend an OATH proceeding. These are the areas that OATH has addressed and must continue to address.

Racial Equity Goals

Short-Term

1. **Goal:** Strengthen training for agency leadership to build internal knowledge and commitment to racial equity work
 - a. **Outcome:** By the end of 2026, ensure at least 90% of OATH leadership have undergone training.
 - b. **Strategies:**
 - Source and collaborate with partner agencies to provide appropriate training for OATH leadership
 - Build leadership buy-in and facilitate additional conversations on the application of trainings in OATH's work
 - c. **Indicators:**
 - Percent of leadership who completed training
2. **Goal:** Ensure all agency public-facing material is anti-marginalizing so that New Yorkers of different language preferences and literacy levels can access our agency's information and services
 - a. **Outcome:** By the end of 2026, ensure 100% of the agency's online informational materials, forms, and applications are written in plain language and translated into at least all Local Law 30 languages.
 - b. **Strategies:**

- Conduct an inventory of agency's online material to identify gaps in language access and plain language
 - Work with translation vendors to update identified material, and update agency website with new material
- c. **Indicators:**
- Percent of agency online informational materials, forms, and applications written in plain language
 - Percent of agency online informational materials, forms, and applications translated into all Local Law 30 languages

Medium-Term

1. **Goal:** OATH has had a 30% goal for M/WBE utilization and will continue to implement and evaluate goals going forward to ensure they are consistent with federal, state and local law
 - a. **Outcome:** By 2028, maintain consistent implementation and assessment for M/WBE utilization.
 - b. **Strategies:**
 - Review submitted purchase requisitions
 - c. **Indicators:**
 - Percent of all contracts awarded to M/WBE vendors
 - Number of M/WBE contracts awarded disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and gender
2. **Goal:** Build diverse recruitment pipelines to ensure equitable access to information about agency vacancies
 - a. **Outcome:** By 2028, build at least 5 new recruitment pipelines through partnerships with diverse professional networks.
 - b. **Strategies:**
 - Expand agency participation in recruitment fairs, workshops, and networking events
 - Develop and institutionalize contact databases through leveraging internal and external agency networks
 - c. **Indicators:**
 - Percent of new partnerships developed with groups for underrepresented communities
 - Number of new hires informed of opportunity through new partnerships

3. **Goal:** Upon request, in situations where City Hall policymakers need summons and penalty data to assess and make recommendations regarding equity and enforcement, provide City Hall with such data to the degree the data exists at OATH (as the tribunal, OATH itself does not assess or make recommendations on enforcement policy)
 - a. **Outcome:** By 2028, ensure 100% of requested data provision is timely and accurate.
 - b. **Strategies:**
 - Inform OMB with as much lead time as possible so they may approve of backfills of data and IT team members
 - c. **Indicators:**
 - Percent of data provided to City Hall within 6 business days upon request for unscheduled requests
 - Percent of data provided to City Hall on time for scheduled requests
4. **Goal:** Prioritize racial equity training for all agency personnel to understand the need for the work and how personnel can uphold these values
 - a. **Outcome:** By 2028, 100% of agency personnel is fully trained on racial equity values.
 - b. **Strategies:**
 - Source and collaborate with partner agencies to provide a training for OATH personnel on racial equity
 - Communicate to personnel on importance of trainings and facilitate additional conversations on the application of trainings in OATH's work
 - c. **Indicators:**
 - Percent of agency personnel trained on racial equity values

Long-Term

1. **Goal:** Build an inclusive workplace where employees are supported and advance their careers, particularly those of underrepresented groups based on agency disparity analysis
 - a. **Outcome:** By 2034, 100% of agency divisions are representative of the City's population.
 - b. **Strategies:**
 - Create yearly "stay interviews" to understand the experiences of existing staff in under-represented populations
 - c. **Indicators:**
 - Percent of stay interviews analyzed
 - Number of career counseling sessions conducted in a year
 - Percent of career counseling sessions conducted for underrepresented staff

- Percent attrition of all staff
 - Percent attrition of underrepresented staff
2. **Goal:** Proactively communicate established policies agencywide to foster a culture of transparency and inclusion
- a. **Outcome:** By 2034, 100% of agency personnel are able to view all agency policies.
 - b. **Strategies:**
 - Create SharePoint or equivalent folders with published policies and FAQs
 - c. **Indicators:**
 - Number of communications on existing policies, additional policies, or changes to existing policies

Draft Community Equity Priorities Referenced

- #1: Close the racial, gender identity, age, and disability gaps in city government positions that create or decide over city policy with individuals who are committed to equity, and social justice.
- #4: Ensure and appropriately fund government and organizations working with NYC government provide program services and share written information in the city's top languages at an accessible level.
- #14: Increase and appropriately fund accountability and disciplinary power of oversight bodies for law enforcement and all city workers who cause harm to people and abuse their authority.

Spotlight Wins

- OATH ensures information is accessible by providing it in plain language and translating it into the top 10 languages spoken in NYC. Everyone has access to free translation services for help sessions, trials, hearings, community service and mediations. OATH also makes all forms and applications available in the top ten languages and has also made other documents such as outreach flyers, informational fact sheets, and handouts available in the top ten languages. In addition, OATH has redesigned a majority of the summonses that agencies use to have clearer plain language instructions, fewer words, and a helpful QR code which will redirect the reader to more information.
- Not having a lawyer should not limit one's ability to navigate OATH's processes. OATH has a Help Center which ensures that unrepresented respondents receive non-legal answers to their questions, are aware of their rights, and understand the hearing process. A resident is afforded the opportunity to have a Help

Session, which is a one-on-one meeting with a Procedural Justice Coordinator in their language of preference. More than a dozen explanatory fact sheets on enforcement agency processes and OATH's hearing process are available at the Help Center and may be translated into the top ten languages. These include but are not limited to the following fact sheets: DOB Certificates of Correction; DOB Stipulations; DCA Settlements; Helpful Information for Haircutters, Hair Salons, and Barbershops; and Summonses Where Your Property Was Taken Away.

- OATH leverages technology to make our adjudications more accessible to parties. A text-message reminder system is available to all OATH respondents to help ensure that people never miss a hearing and get real-time updates about the status of their case. Since the inception of the text-message reminder system in September 2020, approximately 13,128 respondents have registered for these reminders. The text message system can also be utilized to initiate contact with our Help Center. In addition, during the pandemic, OATH added a call-back option to the Hearings Division remote hearings system, allowing respondents to avoid waiting on hold and instead request a call-back when their hearing is ready to go forward. Since this option was launched, around 82 percent of respondents have taken advantage of it. For outreach materials, OATH also created its own QR Code, which takes users to a specific page on the OATH website called "You Received a Summons, Now What?" This webpage enumerates all the options available for someone who has just received a summons including links to other webpages and online forms such as reschedule form, payment websites, hearing request forms and other pertinent information. OATH also meets people where they are. We have offices in every borough where people can come in person to ask questions and take care of OATH business. Each year, thousands of respondents come to our borough offices to get work done.
- Affinity-group bar associations have posted OATH job openings to their members, increasing and diversifying our potential recruitment pool.
- Integrally tied to racial justice and equity is the issue of interpersonal and group conflict and conflict resolution, and OATH's Center for Creative Conflict Resolution (CCCR) has been doing important work in this space. Since 2016, CCCR has been addressing workplace conflicts that include implicit bias, in-group/out-group biases, through early-intervention interest-based processes like mediation, coaching, training, and consultations. In 2023 alone, has provided over 500 processes across city agencies and mayoral offices. CCCR is in the early stages of developing a two-part best practices model that is rooted in the theories, and principles of Restorative Practices aimed at fostering Restorative Work Environments (RWE) in City government workplaces and to train and offer

technical assistance to agencies who want to incorporate Restorative Practices into their public-facing work.