

OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE TRIALS AND HEARINGS



WHAT WE DO

The Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH) is New York City's central, independent administrative law court. Administrative law courts are tribunals responsible for hearing disputes related to government agencies' administrative actions and decisions. OATH consists of three divisions responsible for adjudicating City matters: OATH Trials Division, OATH Hearings Division, and OATH Special Education Hearings Division. The Trials Division adjudicates a wide range of issues that are referred to by any City agency, board, or commission. Its caseload includes employee discipline matters, hearings for civil servants, Conflicts of Interest Board (COIB) cases, proceedings related to the retention of seized vehicles by the police, City-issued license revocation cases, real estate, zoning and loft law violations, City contract disputes, cases alleging violations of worker protection laws, and the New York City Human Rights Law. Trials are conducted by Administrative Law Judges who are appointed to five-year terms by OATH's Commissioner and Chief Administrative Law Judge. Hearings at the Hearings Division are conducted by Judicial Hearing Officers on summonses issued by more than 25 different City enforcement agencies for alleged violations of City laws or rules. The Special Education Hearings Division (SEHD) adjudicates disputes about special education services provided to New York City children. OATH also houses the Center for Creative Conflict Resolution, which provides mediation and restorative justice support to City government agencies, and the Administrative Judicial Institute, a resource center that provides training, continuing education, and support services for the City's Administrative Law Judges and Hearing Officers.

FOCUS ON EQUITY

OATH's focus on equity involves ensuring that all New York City residents and businesses with matters before OATH have equitable access to services and are treated fairly. All New Yorkers, including those who are limited in their ability to visit an OATH office, have the convenient option of challenging summonses they receive from City enforcement agencies by phone. Those who are limited in their ability to attend remote hearing may request an in-person hearing. To further equitable access to justice, OATH offers respondents a call back option to minimize the time it takes for hearings to start. OATH also reminds respondents via text messaging of upcoming hearings and related instructions.

OATH's Help Center is another tool to further access to justice. Through one-on-one sessions, the Help Center supports self-represented respondents in navigating the OATH process. Support is provided in-person, over the phone, via email, or by text message. While this support does not constitute legal advice, it does connect respondents with services offered by the New York City Department of Small Business Services.

Key to OATH's focus on equity is also ensuring all materials are available to every New Yorker, regardless of the language they speak. OATH provides free interpretation services at all hearings and free document translation for any evidence, application or form. Additionally, OATH provides hearing decisions in any language requested free of charge at both of its high-volume adjudicatory divisions, namely the OATH Hearings Division and the OATH Special Education Hearings Division.

OUR SERVICES AND GOALS

SERVICE 1 Adjudicate alleged violations of State and City administrative laws.

Goal 1a Hear cases promptly and issue timely and fair decisions at the OATH Trials Division.

SERVICE 2 Adjudicate alleged violations of City administrative laws.

Goal 2a Hear cases promptly and issue timely and fair decisions at the OATH Hearings Division.

SERVICE 3 Adjudicate due process complaints related to special education services.

Goal 3a Hear cases promptly and issue timely and fair decisions at the OATH Special Education Hearings Decision.

SERVICE 4 Provide conflict resolution services and restorative practices to City agencies and the public through OATH’s Center for Creative Conflict Resolution.

Goal 4a Administer mediations, trainings, and restorative group sessions to restore interpersonal relationships between City employees who experience conflict at work and to support City residents and businesses who experience conflict with their neighbors or landlords.

SERVICE 5 Provide assistance to self-represented respondents who have cases at OATH.

Goal 5a Provide timely assistance and case-specific information to self-represented respondents who have cases at OATH’s Hearings Division through OATH’s Help Center.

HOW WE PERFORMED

- OATH's Trials Division holds proceedings on a diverse range of complex administrative law matters in a manner akin to civil trials without a jury. In the first four months of Fiscal 2026, the Trials Division received 788 cases from agencies, 12 percent fewer than over the same period of Fiscal 2025. Much of this decrease is a result of a decrease in case filings (specifically by the Department of Correction) and a decrease in the number of cases brought by licensing agencies against City licensees (specifically by the Taxi and Limousine Commission). In the first four months of Fiscal 2026, the average time to issue a decision at the Trials Division reached 40 days, a 51 percent increase compared to the same period in Fiscal 2025. In the same vein, the rate of OATH Trials Division cases with decisions issued within 45 business days decreased by 13 percentage points (from 86 percent to 73 percent). These resolution times fluctuate due to various factors outside the control of the Trials Division, including the nature and complexity of filed cases as well as whether a case is subject to urgent statutory or court-mandated resolution deadlines.
- OATH's Hearings Division is responsible for holding hearings on summonses issued by a variety of City enforcement agencies. In the first four months of Fiscal 2026, the Hearings Division received 356,503 summonses from enforcement agencies, a nine percent decrease from the 390,833 summonses filed in the first four months in Fiscal 2025. The total surpassed one million in Fiscal 2025 for the first time on record. Due to the decrease in summonses filed, the number of summonses resolved through pre-hearing activities (such as cures, stipulations, settlements and pre-hearing payments) decreased seven percent from 131,524 to 122,363. In the first four months of Fiscal 2026, OATH held 15 percent more total hearings (89,752) compared to the same period in Fiscal 2025 (78,374). All hearing methods (hearings by phone, in-person, by mail, and online) increased. Hearings conducted in-person increased nearly 50 percent across reporting periods (from 986 to 1,470), although in-person hearings total less than two percent of all hearings conducted. Consistent with the 12 percent increase in the number of decisions issued (from 220,930 to 248,229), the average time to render a decision increased from 10 days to 14 days.
- OATH's Special Education Hearings Division (SEHD) provides fair and impartial hearings to resolve disputes between parents of students with disabilities and the New York City Department of Education (DOE). Fiscal 2025 was the first full fiscal year where SEHD held full jurisdiction of these cases after originally sharing jurisdiction with non-OATH hearing officers. In the first four months of Fiscal 2026, cases appointed to the SEHD decreased by 31 percent compared to the same period in Fiscal 2025 (from 11,438 to 7,859 cases). However, Fiscal 2025's total is an outlier because DOE filed a tranche of 4,152 new cases all at once in July 2024 to meet a deadline associated with a New York State Education Department emergency regulation that precluded those types of cases from being filed[CS1.1]. Removing this outlier, the number of cases appointed to Impartial Hearing Officers is within the standard range.
- Due to the unusually high level of cases in Fiscal 2025, the number of cases closed per Special Education Hearing Officer decreased 26 percent (from 20.27 to 15.08), settlement and other pre-trial conferences conducted for special education cases decreased 10 percent (from 8,559 to 7,698), and special education hearings conducted decreased 43 percent (from 6,905 to 3,913) across comparative reporting periods. The number of cases per officer also decreased due to the hiring of 22 more Special Education Hearing Officers over the reporting period. Additionally, the average time from the appointment of OATH Special Education Hearing Officers to case closure increased 39 percent (from 83.86 days to 116.30 days) because many cases filed during the July 2024 surge were closed more quickly than normal. This lowered the average for Fiscal 2025 and the case closure rate in Fiscal 2026 is a return to expected levels.
- OATH's Center for Creative Conflict Resolution (the Center) is the City's central resource for alternative dispute resolution and restorative practices. All services administered by the Center decreased in the first four months of Fiscal 2026 compared to the same period in Fiscal 2025. The number of conflict trainings decreased the most (from 34 to 17) and mediations for City workplace disputes also decreased (from 25 to 18). These decreases are attributed to fluctuations in demand, as the Center's work with City agencies is determined by the types of services requested, the specific needs of the individuals involved, and the parties' voluntary consent to participate. The satisfaction rate for all Center services reached 100 percent in the first four months of Fiscal 2026, an increase of two percentage points from the satisfaction rate during the same period last fiscal year.

- OATH's Help Center provides information and resources to individuals who do not have a lawyer or paid, professional, registered representative. OATH Procedural Justice Coordinators can provide details on the hearing process and answer questions about charges and procedural options available to respondents. The total number of full, in-depth case Help Sessions conducted by OATH's Help Center decreased slightly in the first four months of Fiscal 2026 compared to the same period in Fiscal 2025 from 15,256 to 14,886. Meanwhile, more people received targeted, issue-specific assistance via the Help Center's text messaging service and by calling the Help Center and leaving a voicemail. The number of respondents helped via text message increased by ten percent (from 4,476 to 4,913) and the number of people who received assistance after leaving an email or voice message increased by 17 percent (from 7,738 to 9,075). Despite the significant increase in email and voicemails left for the Help Center, the average time for respondents to receive assistance after leaving an email or voicemail decreased by 80 percent in the first four months of Fiscal 2026 as compared to the same period in Fiscal 2025 (from 3.17 days to 0.63 days). However, the average time for respondents to receive assistance after making requests online or by text both doubled over the comparative reporting periods. Still, the average time to initiate assistance after a text request remained under half of one day.

SERVICE 1 Adjudicate alleged violations of State and City administrative laws.

Goal 1a Hear cases promptly and issue timely and fair decisions at the OATH Trials Division.

Performance Indicators	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY25	FY26
Cases filed at OATH Trials Division	3,759	3,653	2,556	*	*	897	788
Cases closed at OATH Trials Division	3,874	3,538	2,606	*	*	1,008	871
Cases processed per Administrative Law Judge	324.2	313.6	210.4	*	*	74.6	78.2
OATH Trials Division settlement rate (%)	57%	60%	61%	55%	55%	63%	56%
Average time for OATH Trials Division to issue decisions after records closed (business days)	31.4	36.0	40.7	*	*	26.5	40.0
★ OATH Trials Division cases with decisions issued within 45 business days (%)	89%	83%	79%	↑	↑	86%	73%
★ OATH Trials Division facts and conclusions adopted by agencies (%)	99%	99%	97%	96%	96%	98%	96%
★ Critical Indicator 🌟 Equity Indicator "NA" Not Available ⬆️⬆️ Directional Target * None							

SERVICE 2 Adjudicate alleged violations of City administrative laws.

Goal 2a Hear cases promptly and issue timely and fair decisions at the OATH Hearings Division.

Performance Indicators	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY25	FY26
Summonses received from enforcement agencies	764,871	850,256	1,105,448	*	*	390,833	356,503
★ Summonses resolved through pre-hearing activities	263,343	285,592	377,222	*	*	131,524	122,363
★ Decisions issued	492,246	592,716	678,578	*	*	220,930	248,229
— Hearing and administrative decisions issued	175,941	193,249	217,049	*	*	72,043	85,237
— Default decisions issued	316,305	399,467	461,529	*	*	148,887	162,992
Hearings held	221,726	231,851	240,902	*	*	78,374	89,752
— Hearings conducted by phone	189,541	192,166	197,077	*	*	65,323	72,380
— Hearings conducted in-person	1,969	2,775	2,850	*	*	986	1,470
— Hearings conducted with written defenses submitted online	26,942	33,832	38,904	*	*	11,420	14,983
— Hearings conducted with written defenses submitted by mail	3,274	3,078	2,071	*	*	645	919
★ Average days for Judicial Hearings Officers to render decisions	9	12	11	*	*	10	14
★ Appeals decisions rendered	2,042	2,711	2,074	*	*	836	631
★ Critical Indicator 🌟 Equity Indicator "NA" Not Available ⬆️⬆️ Directional Target * None							

SERVICE 3 Adjudicate due process complaints related to special education services.

Goal 3a

Hear cases promptly and issue timely and fair decisions at the OATH Special Education Hearings Decision.

Performance Indicators	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY25	FY26
Cases filed and appointed to OATH Special Education Hearings Division	NA	19,117	19,499	*	*	11,438	7,859
Cases closed at OATH Special Education Hearings Division	NA	15,583	18,376	*	*	6,730	5,669
Average number of cases closed per Special Education Hearing Officer per month	NA	16.93	17.91	*	*	20.27	15.08
★ Special education cases closed within regulatory timeframe (%)	NA	95.28%	70.17%	90.00%	90.00%	85.66%	66.36%
★ Average time from appointment to OATH Special Education Hearing Officer to case closure	NA	84.53	101.88	105.00	105.00	83.86	116.30
Settlement and other pre-trial conferences conducted for special education cases	NA	14,489	21,174	*	*	8,559	7,698
Special education hearings conducted	NA	19,764	19,617	*	*	6,905	3,913
Final decisions issued on the merits	NA	6,651	11,448	*	*	4,464	3,968
Special education cases where parents are represented by counsel or other representative (% of total)	NA	93.32%	85.14%	*	*	80.79%	96.02%
Language services provided to parent	NA	630	748	*	*	330	270
★ Critical Indicator ● Equity Indicator "NA" Not Available ⇅ Directional Target * None							

SERVICE 4 Provide conflict resolution services and restorative practices to City agencies and the public through OATH's Center for Creative Conflict Resolution.

Goal 4a

Administer mediations, trainings, and restorative group sessions to restore interpersonal relationships between City employees who experience conflict at work and to support City residents and businesses who experience conflict with their neighbors or landlords.

Performance Indicators	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY25	FY26
Mediations administered for City employees	50	81	67	*	*	25	20
Conflict resolution trainings administered for City employees	55	85	67	*	*	34	19
Coaching sessions for City personnel	79	71	100	*	*	32	31
Consultations for City personnel	338	316	241	*	*	91	78
Restorative group sessions	22	23	17	*	*	4	6
Mediations administered for members of the public	7	10	8	*	*	7	1
★ Participants who reported satisfaction with conflict resolution services	97%	95%	96%	*	*	98%	100%
★ Critical Indicator ● Equity Indicator "NA" Not Available ⇅ Directional Target * None							

SERVICE 5

Provide assistance to self-represented respondents who have cases at OATH.

Goal 5a

Provide timely assistance and case-specific information to self-represented respondents who have cases at OATH’s Hearings Division through OATH’s Help Center.

Performance Indicators	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY25	FY26
Help Sessions conducted by OATH Help Center	38,435	33,595	44,308	*	*	15,256	14,886
★ Average days after online request is made to initiate Help Center assistance	0.37	0.40	0.77	*	*	0.51	1.12
Respondents assisted by Help Center via text messaging exchange	NA	NA	12,691	*	*	4,476	4,913
★ Average days after text message request is made to initiate Help Center assistance	NA	NA	0.29	↓	↓	0.22	0.44
Respondents assisted by Help Center via email/voicemail exchange	NA	NA	25,001	*	*	7,738	9,075
★ Average days after email/voicemail request is made to initiate Help Center assistance	NA	NA	1.82	↓	↓	3.17	0.63
Respondents who were assisted by the Help Center at customer service windows	NA	NA	58,839	*	*	21,514	22,218
★ Critical Indicator ● Equity Indicator “NA” Not Available ⬆️⬆️ Directional Target * None							

AGENCY CUSTOMER SERVICE

Performance Indicators	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY25	FY26
Customer Experience							
Completed requests for interpretation	8,778	11,466	11,795	*	*	4,408	4,167
Letters responded to within 14 days (%)	91.67%	100%	100%	*	*	100%	100%
E-mails responded to within 14 days (%)	99%	100%	100%	*	*	100%	100%
CORE facility rating	100	100	100	*	*	NA	NA
★ Critical Indicator ● Equity Indicator “NA” Not Available ⬆️⬆️ Directional Target * None							

AGENCY RESOURCES

Resource Indicators	Actual			Sept. 2025 MMR Plan	Updated Plan	Plan	4-Month Actual	
	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY26¹	FY27¹	FY25	FY26
Expenditures (\$000,000)²	\$55.8	\$67.3	\$71.6	\$80.9	\$81.8	\$80.1	\$25.4	\$28.0
Revenues (\$000,000)	\$137.1	\$146.6	\$173.3	\$146.8	\$158.0	\$148.9	\$58.9	\$70.6
Personnel	429	458	499	593	595	597	470	491
Overtime paid (\$000)	\$39	\$128	\$78	\$10	\$10	\$10	\$30	\$36
¹February 2026 Financial Plan. ²Expenditures include all funds “NA” - Not Available								

SPENDING AND BUDGET INFORMATION

Where possible, the relationship between an agency's goals and its expenditures and planned resources, by budgetary unit of appropriation (UA), is shown in the 'Applicable MMR Goals' column. Each relationship is not necessarily exhaustive or exclusive. Any one goal may be connected to multiple UAs, and any UA may be connected to multiple goals.

Unit of Appropriation	Expenditures FY25 ¹ (\$000,000)	February 2026 Financial Plan FY26 ² (\$000,000)	Applicable MMR Goals ³
001 - Personal Services	\$56.2	\$62.3	All
002 - Other Than Personal Services	\$15.5	\$19.5	All
Agency Total	\$71.6	\$81.8	
¹ Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for the Fiscal Year ended June 30, 2025. Includes all funds. ² Includes all funds. ³ Refer to agency goals listed at front of chapter.			

NOTEWORTHY CHANGES, ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS

- OATH expanded and updated the indicators included in Goal 2a to more clearly convey the start-to-finish process for resolving a hearing. Changes include the following:
 - The indicators 'Summonses adjudicated', 'Summonses processed at OATH Hearings Division (total)', and 'Summonses with decisions rendered at OATH Hearings Division' were replaced by 'Decisions issued', 'Hearing and administrative decisions issued', and 'Default decisions issued.'
 - The indicator 'Pre-hearing activities at OATH Hearings Division (total)' was renamed 'Summonses resolved through pre-hearing activities.'
 - The indicator 'Hearings held' was added.
 - The indicators 'Defenses submitted by mail (%)', 'OATH hearings by phone (%)', and 'OATH one-click online submissions (% of total remote hearings/submissions)' were removed.
 - The indicator 'Defenses submitted by mail' was renamed 'Hearings conducted with written defenses submitted by mail.'
 - The indicator 'Hearings by phone' was renamed 'Hearings conducted by phone.'
 - The indicator 'OATH one-click online submissions (% of total remote hearings/submissions)' was renamed 'Hearings conducted with written defenses submitted online.'
 - The indicator 'Appeals decisions rendered' was added.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For more information on the agency, please visit: www.nyc.gov/oath.

