



NYSBA News Release

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COVID-19 RECOVERY TASK FORCE APPOINTED TO OVERSEE PRO BONO NETWORK

The New York State Bar Association (NYSBA), in partnership with the state court system, has established a COVID-19 Recovery Task Force to oversee the pro bono network of lawyers who will be assisting New Yorkers suffering from the pandemic.

At Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo's urging, the network's first task is dispatching lawyers to help jobless workers — whose ranks have swelled under the state's economic slowdown — apply for unemployment benefits. But the network is quickly gearing up to handle a range of other issues, from evictions to domestic violence to job and housing discrimination.

"The blue-ribbon panel we have assembled includes some of the best minds the New York legal community has to offer," said Chief Judge Janet DiFiore. "I have the utmost confidence that this panel will ensure that those who are in desperate need of legal help will get the assistance they need."

NYSBA President Henry M. Greenberg has directed the task force to focus on setting priorities, recruiting lawyers, coordinating resources and connecting lawyers and clients.

"I'm so grateful that at this difficult time in their own lives, the members of this task force are giving of themselves to help those who are less fortunate," Greenberg said. "We can always count on the generosity of New York's lawyers and I'm proud to be part of this effort. I know that this esteemed panel will act quickly to ease the anguish of fellow New Yorkers."

Former Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman, of counsel at Latham & Watkins and coordinator of the network, said he looks forward to the challenge.

"This esteemed panel brings a depth of experience and perspectives to the task we have at hand — making sure that those who need a lawyer get help as quickly as humanly possible," Lippman said. "We will work tirelessly because we realize that New Yorkers need us now."

Task force members include Syracuse University School of Law Dean Craig M. Boise, Saralyn Cohen, pro bono counsel at Shearman & Sterling; Mylan L. Denerstein, partner at Gibson Dunn & Crutcher; Fordham Law School Dean Matthew Diller, Vincent E. Doyle, president of Neighborhood Legal Services in Buffalo and past president of NYSBA; Cynthia F. Feathers, director of quality enhancement for

appellate and post-conviction representation at the New York State Office of Indigent Legal Services; Robert J. Giuffra Jr., a partner at Sullivan & Cromwell and Seymour W. James, former attorney-in-chief of the NYC Legal Aid Society, a partner at Barket Epstein Kearon Aldea & LoTurco and past president of NYSBA.

Also on the task force are Marcia Levy, executive director at Volunteers of Legal Service; John Kiernan, former managing partner of Debevoise & Plimpton and president of the New York City Bar Association; Alan Levine, partner at Cooley; Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Justice Initiatives Edwina G. Mendelson, John R. Morken, partner and head of the pro bono department at Farrell Fritz; Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York Executive Director Lillian M. Moy; A. Gail Prudenti, dean of Hofstra Law School and former presiding justice, Appellate Division, Second Department and Kathryn Wheelock, law clerk to Chief Judge DiFiore.

In addition, NYSBA and the state court system are announcing that they're publishing a second edition of *The New York State Public Health Legal Manual: A Guide for Judges, Attorneys and Public Health Professionals*, which clarifies issues surrounding many public health statutes, rules and laws. The manual contains a foreword by Chief Judge DiFiore and NYSBA President Greenberg. During this unprecedented public health crisis, the New York State Public Health Legal Manual is available, free of charge, at www.nysba.org/publichealth.

About the New York State Bar Association

The New York State Bar Association is the largest voluntary state bar association in the nation. Since 1876, the Association has helped shape the development of law, educated and informed the legal profession and the public, and championed the rights of New Yorkers through advocacy and guidance in our communities.

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