

Mission Statement of the New Jersey Judiciary

We are an independent branch of government constitutionally entrusted with the fair and just resolution of disputes in order to preserve the rule of law and to protect the rights and liberties guaranteed by the Constitution and laws of the United States and this State.

This guide is made available to assist the court in its effort to:

- promote equal access to the courts;
- ensure fair treatment in the courts;
- heighten public understanding of the judicial system;
- further the equitable, fair, and dignified treatment of all those who use the courts; and
- enhance public confidence in the New Jersey court system.

Contact the local Office of the Ombudsman to share concerns with the court, to offer suggestions about customer service, or to file a complaint about your experience with the court.

[insert contact information for Ombudsman]
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NOTICE

The New Jersey Judiciary offers this document as a resource for court users. It is not an exhaustive statement about the rights and responsibilities of court users but rather a guide outlining general expectations. Each individual is responsible for maintaining appropriate conduct in accordance with relevant state laws and local ordinances.

For more information, contact

Litigant Services Unit
Administrative Office of the Courts
P.O. Box 988
Trenton, NJ 08625-0988



STUART RABNER
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Guide to Court User Rights and Responsibilities



New Jersey Courts
Independence • Integrity • Fairness • Quality Service

Court User Rights

Court users should expect:

Fair and Dignified Treatment

- fair and equitable treatment regardless of race, gender, creed/religion, color, national origin, ancestry, disability or perceived disability, class, position, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, or language barriers;
- impartial judges and court personnel;
- timely and just resolutions;
- fair decisions that are consistent with applicable law;
- open proceedings unless otherwise prohibited by statute or court rule;
- a jury of one's peers when entitled to a jury; and
- courteous and professional treatment from judges and court staff.

Equal Access to Court Programs and Services

- clear and understandable court procedures;
- information on court programs, procedures, and services provided in plain language;
- physically secure and accessible court facilities;
- court-provided interpreters, if needed; and
- access to court records and decisions that are not confidential by court rule or statute.

Court User Responsibilities

Before coming to court, court users should:

- comply with court orders;
- seek the assistance of a lawyer when they need legal advice;
- provide court staff with advance notice of the need for interpreting services or disability accommodations and notify the court of any change in your needs;
- get permission before bringing a camera or other photographic equipment into the courthouse;
- arrive on time and be prepared for court proceedings;
- follow all court security measures and not bring weapons or other prohibited items to the courthouse.

While in court, court users should:

- be courteous to judges, court staff, attorneys, and other court users;
- pay attention to their own behavior, attitudes, and comments and treat others with courtesy and respect;
- maintain proper conduct and decorum in the courtroom during and outside court proceedings as directed by the judge or other court personnel;
- not use cell phones, pagers, laptop computers, tape recorders, CD players, MP3 players, radios, handheld games, or other electronic equipment while in a courtroom without the permission of the judge;
- be truthful when testifying or providing information to the courts; and
- fulfill their civic obligation to perform jury duty fairly and honestly when summoned.

Helpful Tips

- Court users are encouraged to contact the vicinage Office of the Ombudsman for information regarding parking, transportation, case-specific questions, assistance for people with disabilities, interpreting needs, treatment in the court, and scheduling concerns.
- Court staff cannot provide legal advice.
- If you represent yourself, you must follow court rules, statutes, and case law governing the courts of New Jersey.
- Court users whether self-representing or represented by an attorney-at-law are welcome to ask the court and staff for explanations of policies, procedures, processes, and actions.
- The courts process a high volume of cases. Be prepared for delays during your visit.
- If you have not been instructed to bring your child to court, try to make child care arrangements in advance of your court appearance.
- If you have questions or need information on the courts such as self-help court forms, the New Jersey Court Rules, information on interpreting services, access information for persons with disabilities, legal resources and more, visit the