



News Release

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For more information:
Winnie Comfort
Tammy Kendig
609-292-9580

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New Training Video Helps Attorneys Serve Indigent Defendants

The New Jersey Judiciary today released a [video](#) about municipal court appeals, the second in a series of training videos for attorneys who are assigned by the courts to represent indigent defendants.

Attorneys assigned to represent litigants try these appeals before judges in the Superior Court, Criminal Division. The subject of the appeal can involve any case type tried in the municipal court, including parking and motor vehicle violations; municipal ordinances; cases involving hunting, fishing and boating laws; disorderly person violations; and other minor offenses.

The municipal court appeals video provides guidance to attorneys on how and when to set up an initial meeting with a client, what to expect at the initial court hearing, the documents and information that the attorney should expect to receive from the prosecutor during discovery, how to handle a guilty plea, and how to proceed if the defendant requests a trial.

The video also directs attorneys to a manual prepared by the Judiciary for their use in those cases.

The attorneys provide this service “pro bono,” which is a shortened Latin phrase that means “for the public good.”

In his introduction to the video, Chief Justice Stuart Rabner says, “Pro bono work is vital to our court system. One of the most cherished protections our citizens have is the constitutional right to be represented by counsel.”

In New Jersey, defendants who cannot afford an attorney are entitled to free legal representation in certain types of cases. While public defenders are available in certain case types, private attorneys share the burden of providing counsel when the law does not provide for the public defender to do so.

The attorneys are assigned on a rotating basis. They receive no compensation. With few exceptions, all New Jersey attorneys are required to accept pro bono assignments.

Attorneys doing pro bono work might not have experience in practicing the type of law that applies in their assigned case. The video series will help them prepare to represent their clients.

The first video in the series instructed attorneys on how to handle domestic violence contempt cases. To view that video and the municipal court appeals video, go to njcourts.com and click on the YouTube icon on the right side of the page.

Production on a third video to help pro bono attorneys represent clients in parole revocation hearings is underway.

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