

June 1-3, 2021

EVALUATING AND SUSTAINING PANDEMIC-INITIATED COURT-BASED INNOVATIONS



Hon. Edwina G. Mendelson

**New York State Unified Court System
Office for Justice Initiatives**

Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Edwina Mendelson heads the New York State Unified Court System’s Office for Justice Initiatives, tasked with ensuring meaningful access to justice for all New Yorkers in civil, criminal and family courts, regardless of income, background, or special needs. Additionally, Judge Mendelson leads the Equal Justice in Courts Initiative, a top priority for New York State Chief Judge Janet DiFiore, to implement the recommendations of Special Adviser on Equal Justice, Jeh Johnson, in his October 2020 report examining racial bias in the state court system, as well as the implementation of the November 2020 recommendations of the New York State Judicial Committee on Women in the Courts to enhance gender fairness in the New York State Courts.



Judge Mendelson also directs several juvenile and family justice initiatives, including the New York State Unified Court System’s Child Welfare Court Improvement Project, its Advisory Council on Child Fatalities, the ongoing implementation of the seminal law raising the age of criminal responsibility in New York State, and the Child Support and Guardianship Working Groups of the Unified Court System/New York State Bar Association’s COVID-19 Recovery Task Force.

As of January 2021, Judge Mendelson now also oversees the Unified Court System’s Office of Policy & Planning, which is responsible for administering the state’s 343 problem-solving and accountability courts, including groundbreaking opioid courts, drug courts/judicial diversion parts, veterans’ treatment courts, mental health courts, human trafficking intervention courts, domestic violence

courts, integrated domestic violence courts, young adult parts, juvenile treatment courts, community courts, and impaired driving courts.

Judge Mendelson was appointed to the Court of Claims by Governor Andrew Cuomo in 2017 and remains active on the bench, conducting pro se trials in state correctional facilities. Judge Mendelson also serves in Supreme Court Criminal Term, New York County. Previously, she presided over New York County Supreme Court's Youth Part, hearing cases of youth charged as adults.

Judge Mendelson first joined the court system as a Court Attorney-Referee in Queens County Family Court, after representing clients in New York City Housing Court, Family Court, and Supreme Court. She later became a Family Court Judge in 2003, the Queens County Supervising Family Court Judge in 2008, and a year later, was elevated to Administrative Judge of all New York City Family Courts.