



New York City Law Department YEAR IN REVIEW 2022

With offices in all five boroughs and Kingston, N.Y., the New York City Law Department handles over 65,000 active or ongoing legal matters each year. In addition to litigating cases, attorneys draft and review local and State legislation; provide legal counsel to City officials on a wide range of issues (such as criminal justice, social services, education, election reform and environmental policy); oversee juvenile prosecution and the handling of interstate child support matters; handle a vast array of Tort cases and issues, including over 7,000 new suits a year and risk management matters; defend the City and its officials in civil rights cases brought in Federal court in which police, district attorney or correction officer misconduct is alleged; negotiate and structure business transactions; approve leases, contracts and financial instruments for the sale of municipal bonds; and many other critical functions. The office's support professionals also play a key role in our operations and work closely in tandem with our attorneys. Listed below are some major issues and matters handled by the various Law Department Divisions in 2022.

MESSAGE FROM CORPORATION COUNSEL SYLVIA O. HINDS-RADIX

"As the first African-American and Caribbean female appointed as the 81st Corporation Counsel, I am honored to lead the New York City Law Department over the past year. I have had the opportunity to work with some of the best legal minds and dedicated support professionals in the City, and I am always impressed by the level of commitment and professionalism embraced by those who have chosen to devote their careers to public service. As the first year of my tenure comes to a close, I am proud of the work we have done, and I look forward to facing the challenges that lie ahead. The Law Department handles many novel, complex matters – and as you read our 2022 Annual Review, you will discover all that we have accomplished in the last year."

LEGAL DIVISIONS

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW & REGULATORY LITIGATION

Division Chief: Michelle Goldberg-Cahn | Deputy Chief: Karen Selvin

- **Protecting For-Hire Vehicle Driver Income:** Defended a challenge to the rules promulgated to raise the minimum pay for high volume, for-hire vehicle drivers at the same time as taxi driver pay increased. Also counseling the agency client on ways to increase the minimum pay going forward.
- **Expanding Voter Rights:** Defending numerous challenges in State and Federal court to the City's local law allowing non-citizens who are legally in the United States and residents of the City to vote in New York City municipal elections.
- **Protecting Gun Licensing Laws:** Litigating numerous cases by individuals seeking to obtain permits to possess firearms under an array of theories under the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution in response to the recent landmark U.S. Supreme

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Court decision in *Bruen*. Also counseling the New York City Police Department Licensing Division and others on practices for licensing and the application of the new NY State Carry Concealed Improvement Act post-*Bruen*.

- **Public Health Crisis / COVID-19:** Continued to successfully defend against scores of constitutional challenges in Federal and State courts to the City's policies and emergency orders issued in response to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, including challenges to various vaccination incentivization and requirement programs, such as the Key to New York City, requiring patrons of indoor recreational, entertainment, and dining establishments to show proof of vaccination prior to patronizing those establishments as well as the City's order mandating that private employers require their employees to be vaccinated against COVID-19.
- **Open Restaurant Program:** Currently handling a challenge to the City's temporary Open Restaurant Program allowing for outdoor dining that was implemented during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic to allow more opportunities for patrons to dine outdoors and to assist the City's restaurant industry in weathering the effects of the pandemic.
- **Regulation of Delivery Apps:** Handling litigation filed by third-party delivery app services challenging, on constitutional grounds, laws regulating the apps in terms of imposing caps on prices and fees that may be charged by the third-party apps and disclosure of certain customer information to restaurants that utilize the apps.

AFFIRMATIVE LITIGATION

Division Chief: Gail Rubin | Deputy Chief: Eric Proshansky & Melanie Ash

- **Getting Guns off the Street:** Negotiated consent orders requiring four of five defendant online retailers of "ghost guns" to stop sales into New York City of untraceable firearm components that can easily be assembled at home into functioning guns, and requiring the sellers to provide records of past New York City sales of ghost guns. Obtained a preliminary injunction obtained against the fifth defendant based on allegations of statutory public nuisance under New York Gen. Bus. Law section 898-b, which allows suits against gun industry members who fail to establish and maintain reasonable controls to prevent illegal sale and possession of guns in New York and whose practices unreasonably or unlawfully endanger the public.
- **Controlling Foreign Cigarette Trafficking:** Settled suit against the United States Postal Service (USPS) for delivering international packages containing untaxed cigarettes that arrive into airport facilities in violation of federal law prohibiting delivery of cigarettes through the mail; the settlement requires robust USPS reforms including enhanced detection, destruction of illegal cigarette packages as allowed by law rather than returning to sender, and providing illegal shippers' information to law enforcement.
- **Firehouse Repair:** Filed complaint against property owners, developers and contractors working on two development projects adjacent to an Elmhurst, Queens firehouse, who improperly excavated and performed related work causing serious damage to the firehouse and requiring repair or replacement.
- **Opioids Recovery:** Worked to protect the City's interests in settlement agreements with opioid manufacturers and distributors as part of a multi-district litigation and New York lawsuit, resulting in payments of approximately \$75 million in 2022—the first year of many annual payments—to be used to address and remedy the opioid epidemic.
- **Focus on Tenant Protection:** Implemented comprehensive enforcement activities against bad landlords—with more than 40 tenant protection matters opened, 23 lawsuits initiated and court orders or agreements obtained in 25 matters. This resulted in remediation of thousands of code violations and improved living conditions for tenants, including a case in which building owners who illegally evicted tenants and ran unlawful short-term rental operations forfeited a \$2 million property for conversion into affordable housing; City-negotiated compliance agreements with four landlords to ensure remediation of lead-based paint violations covering over 5,000 apartments; and lawsuits to correct and make safe long-standing façade violations.

APPEALS

Division Chief: Richard Dearing | Deputy Chief: Claude Platton & Devin Slack

- **Pandemic-Related Litigation:** Handled a range of pandemic-related litigation in Federal and State appellate courts, including constitutional challenges to employee vaccination requirements and public health experts' advice on the connection between ethnicity and adverse health outcomes before the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit.

- **Education Budget:** Persuaded the New York State Appellate Division to reinstate the New York City Department of Education's roughly \$30 billion annual operating budget, which a trial court had set aside in its entirety on the eve of the school year, threatening planning affecting more than a million students.
- **Ban on Dangerous Police Restraints:** Successfully opposed a constitutional challenge before the New York State Appellate Division brought by a group of police unions to a local law criminalizing law enforcement officers' use of chokeholds and other dangerous restraints.
- **Land Use and Environmental Litigation:** Successfully defended against challenges to various developments and projects before the New York State Appellate Division, including a citywide street and sidewalk dining program; the approval of an expansion to a Manhattan art museum; a rezoning measure bringing much-needed housing to a Brooklyn neighborhood; and the approval of work on property that would advance supportive and affordable housing in a landmarked Brooklyn district.
- **Amicus Briefs:** Filed amicus briefs on a wide range of issues, from the power to adopt health regulations to protect New Yorkers from the spread of infectious disease to the procedures governing the placement of children with out-of-state parents, to the government's assumption of a special duty to particular members of the public.

COMMERCIAL & REAL ESTATE LITIGATION

Division Chief: Richard Schulsohn | Deputy Chief: Robert Funkhouser & Amanda Papandrea

- **Defended City and Homeowners in Build It Back Program:** Obtained dismissal of \$12 million in claims brought by a Build it Back contractor seeking amounts in excess of its contract and protected Hurricane Sandy victims' homes from foreclosure by obtaining dismissal of 25 actions filed by a Build it Back contractor.
- **Enforced City's Contract Rights:** Negotiated completion contract with surety pursuant to performance bond to complete a task-order contract for agency at no additional cost to the City.
- **Improved City's Contracting Processes:** Provided counsel to the Capital Process Reform Task Force in developing recommendations for improving City construction contracting, including procurement reform, streamlining approvals, managing projects more effectively and growing the number of New Yorkers who can participate.
- **Resolved Complex Telecommunications Case:** Settled on very favorable terms a federal §1983 lawsuit by payphone franchisee alleging novel First Amendment violations and retaliation claims.
- **Defended City Initiatives:** Obtained dismissal of a challenge to the City's Bike Share program, which threatened the use of sidewalks and streets for bike stations.
- **Defended Hotel Workers Severance Law:** Defended a local law requiring severance payments to hotel workers laid off as a result of the COVID pandemic against a motion for a preliminary injunction based on claims of federal labor law pre-emption.

CONTRACTS & REAL ESTATE

Division Chief: Amrita Prabhakar Barth | Deputy Chief: Isabel-Galis Menendez

- **Coastal Resiliency Projects:** Advised on the East Side Coastal Resiliency (ESCR) Project, a coastal protection initiative jointly funded by the City of New York and the Federal government aimed at reducing flood risk due to coastal storms and sea level rise on Manhattan's East Side from East 25th Street to Montgomery Street. The Division continues to advise the various involved agencies on the real property interests necessary for the placement of the coastal protection facilities on property owned by entities other than the City, and it assisted in the drafting, negotiation and review of related documents. A new coastal protection initiative is now being planned for the Red Hook neighborhood in Brooklyn, and the Division is providing advice there as well.
- **FIFA World Cup 2026:** Participated in North America's bid to host the Fédération Internationale De Football Association (FIFA) Soccer World Cup in 2026. After North America was chosen, New York City was then selected to be one of the cities to host a number of games. With the games being held at Giants Stadium in the Meadowlands, the City is collaborating with the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority (NJSEA) to create a host committee entity and enter into the requisite agreements. The Division reviewed the initial agreement with FIFA and along with Economic Development, is providing advice on the creation of a host committee entity. The

Division will be drafting and reviewing agreements between the City and NJSEA as well as related agreements among various other parties.

- **Democratic National Convention Bid:** Submitted a bid to host the 2024 Democratic National Convention (DNC). The Division, along with Tax & Bankruptcy Litigation and Economic Development, reviewed and provided advice on the City's proposal. The Division also provided advice on the creation of a host committee entity and the relationship between the Mayor's Fund and the City with regard to funding convention activities, and is reviewing and negotiating agreements with the DNC and the Host Committee in anticipation of possibly being chosen to host the 2024 Convention.
- **Housing and Services for Asylum Seekers:** Advising and reviewing contracts for housing and services for asylum seekers.
- **Procurement/Not-for-Profit Contracting Task Force:** Continuing to participate in working groups proposing and implementing various changes in the City's procurements with not-for-profits to streamline the process with the goal of being able to contract with and pay not-for-profit contractors more efficiently.
- **Privacy/Identifying Information:** Continuing to counsel on compliance with the Identifying Information law, specifically whether the Identifying Information Rider or the Privacy Protection Rider is required or appropriate.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Division Chief: Betty Woo | Deputy Chief: Kim Bryan

- **Comunilife II:** Negotiated lease for construction of a new 92-unit affordable and supportive housing development at New York City Health + Hospital's Woodhull Campus in North Brooklyn, of which 56 units will be supportive housing for former patients at the hospital.
- **Park Avenue Viaduct:** Executed master agreement and ancillary agreements in connection with the Metropolitan Transit Authority's (MTA) replacement of portions of the Park Avenue Viaduct, an overhead Metro-North rail viaduct in East Harlem. Among other things, such agreements provide the MTA with access to City property during construction and address relocation of occupants underneath the rail viaduct, including various City agencies and occupants at the City-owned La Marqueta marketplace.
- **Putnam Railway:** Executed a purchase and sale agreement with CSX, a leading supplier of rail-based freight transportation, to purchase a segment of a former rail corridor and convert it to interim trail use to connect West 230th Street to Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx and to construct an open channel stream to alleviate flooding in the area; the transaction is anticipated to close in 2024.
- **Sunset Park Library:** Acquired the "Library Unit" in a new condominium building constructed on the site of the former Sunset Park Public Library in Brooklyn, which was sold by the City in 2018 and which will be redeveloped with a new eight-story mixed-use building containing an expanded public library and affordable rental housing on the upper floors.
- **Willets Point:** Negotiated term sheet for the redevelopment of "Phase 1B" of Willets Point, a 17-acre site in Queens to include a multi-use stadium anticipated to be home to a professional soccer club, approximately 40,000 square feet of public open space and assorted mixed-use development that may include a hotel, retail stores and affordable housing.

ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

Division Chief: Hilary Meltzer | Deputy Chief: Chris Reo

- **Supporting Environmental Justice:** Advised on multiple aspects of the City's efforts to advance environmental justice, including advocacy on State legislation and implementation of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act as well as implementation of the City's own environmental justice laws.
- **Resiliency Projects:** Worked with agencies on projects designed to make the City more resilient to sea level rise, including the Rockaways, South Shore of Staten Island and Lower Manhattan projects; also supported the Battery Park City resiliency project in litigation.
- **Advancing Land-Use Decisions:** Advised on several land-use initiatives, including the environmental and other land-use reviews, and successfully defended the Governors Island rezoning and the rezoning that facilitates development of the New York Blood Center bioscience research center.

- **Challenging “Greenwashing” by Fossil Fuel Companies:** Pursued an action alleging that oil companies violated the City’s Consumer Protection Law through misleading advertising campaigns directed at consumers in New York City, and participated as an *amicus* in “greenwashing” litigation brought by other state and local governments. (Companies that greenwash intentionally make their products and policies appear more environmentally friendly—or less environmentally damaging—than they actually are.)
- **Cleanup of Hazardous Substances:** Continue to coordinate the City’s compliance with federal clean-up procedures at numerous sites including the Gowanus Canal and Newtown Creek, as well as sites owned by the National Park Service that were formerly used as City landfills.

FAMILY COURT

Division Chief: Jennifer Gilroy Ruiz | **Deputy Chief:** Jessica Latour, Rosemarie Peyton, Cecillia Shepard & Aimee Sklar-Calogero

- **Juvenile Delinquency Prosecution:** Worked on behalf of the children, families and communities of New York City—365 days, nights, weekends and holidays a year—in the citywide Family, Criminal and Supreme Courts. Handled all juvenile delinquency cases and more than 75 percent of adolescent offender cases that originated in the Youth Parts. Supported those harmed by youth crime including at the five borough-based Child Advocacy Centers. Advocated for rehabilitative outcomes that balance the needs and best interests of youth with the need for community safety. Enhanced investigation and prosecution of serious felony matters, including a substantial increase in firearms cases. Developed in-house legal trainings for attorneys and support professionals across the Division, including beginning and advanced skills trial advocacy programs.
- **Interstate Child Support:** Established orders of parentage and child support, and pursued modification and enforcement of existing child support orders on behalf of City residents and out-of-state families. Supported the expansion of the Parent Support Program to all five boroughs. Developed in-house legal and skills trainings for attorneys and support professionals across the Division, and collaborated with other jurisdictions by conducting virtual cross-presentations to child support professionals in other states and countries, including Israel and Canada.
- **Outreach and Diversion:** Participated in a critical, ongoing part of the Division’s work: embracing extensive community outreach so that our staff and community members can meet and interact with each other. As the Division moves forward from the pandemic, Division members have begun to resume their attendance at in-person gatherings, including school and community events. Rehabilitation is a crucial element of juvenile justice, and it starts with Family Court’s consideration of whether the youth and community member who experienced harm would benefit from restorative justice opportunities offered through diversion. Divisions attorneys, diversion coordinators and the juvenile justice resource specialist supervisor work together to handle and oversee cases, and recommend optimal programming for youth.

GENERAL LITIGATION

Division Chief: Peter Farrell | **Deputy Chief:** Marilyn Richter & Jonathan Pines

- **Prison Conditions Litigation:** Defended against various cases asserting allegations of unlawful prison conditions at Rikers Island and borough central booking locations.
- **NYC Schools Budget:** Prevailed in a procedural challenge to the adoption of the Department of Education’s \$31 billion operating budget for fiscal year 2023.
- **DNA Collection:** Defended against claims of improper collection and retention of DNA from arrestees.
- **Education Services:** Defended various class actions surrounding the process by which parents challenge the adequacy of education services provided to children with special needs.
- **Access to Public Facilities:** Handling ongoing challenges brought under the Americans with Disabilities Act to the accessibility of various public facilities including police precincts, courthouses and public libraries.
- **Asylum Seekers:** Working with other office colleagues, continue assisting on multi-agency efforts to address the needs of recently-arrived asylum seekers into New York City.

LABOR & EMPLOYMENT LAW

Division Chief: Andrea O'Connor | Deputy Chief: Maxwell Leighton & Iván Méndez

- **Vaccination Mandate:** Successfully defended the legality of the vaccine mandate as a condition of employment in State and Federal courts. Also defended the reasonable accommodation process employed by agencies when considering religious and medical exemptions. Most recently, the Division is defending hundreds of state court proceedings challenging agency denials of religious and medical accommodations to the vaccine mandate.
- **Class and Collective Actions:** Continued handling of the Division's usual high-volume caseload of labor and employment law matters while experiencing an influx of class and collective actions, including challenges to the City's pay practices.
- **Client Advice:** Continued providing City agencies with day-to-day guidance and advice on a broad range of labor and employment law issues, including wage and hour compliance; reasonable accommodations; the Family Medical Leave Act; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act; State and local human rights law; the Americans with Disabilities Act; the Age Discrimination in Employment Act; and general retaliation complaints.

LEGAL COUNSEL

Division Chief: Stephen Louis | Deputy Chief: Martha Mann Alfaro & Spencer Fisher

- **NYCHA Trust:** Worked with the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) and the Mayor's Office to draft complex legislation authorizing the creation of a new public entity to assist in financing and rehabilitating public housing by leveraging Federal assistance and new efficient procurement methods; the legislation was enacted in 2022.
- **Gun Control Work Post-Bruen:** Liaised closely with attorneys from other divisions, the New York City Police Department and the Mayor's Office to craft multi-faceted responses to the 2022 Supreme Court decision in *Bruen* which invalidated the "proper cause" standard for handgun carry permits in New York State. These included input into new State legislation; local legislation defining the scope of Times Square as a sensitive zone; and new permitting rules designed to address the decision and the new legislation.
- **Racial Justice Commission Proposals:** Provided counsel to the Racial Justice Commission throughout 2022 to ensure that the robust public education effort in support of its ambitious Charter amendment proposals conformed to legal standards governing such efforts. The proposals were adopted by the voters, and Division attorneys will be counseling on their implementation.
- **Asylum Seekers:** Worked with the Mayor's Office and affected agencies to analyze numerous legal issues in connection with the City's expedited and far-reaching response to the dramatic increase in asylum seekers, including issues concerning the nature and scope of services to be provided and funding options.
- **COVID 19 & Post-COVID Planning:** Provided advice as well as drafted orders and legislation in connection with the City's efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath. This work ranged from counseling agencies about lifting requirements for vaccination and masking to drafting local legislation to make the Open Restaurants Program permanent.

MUNICIPAL FINANCE

Division Chief: Albert Rodriguez | Deputy Chief: Michael Moore

- **Bond Transactions:** Provided legal services on more than \$17 billion of City bond issues that financed City capital projects or refinanced previously issued bonds.
- **Bond Refinancings:** Refinancing transactions resulted in debt service savings in excess of \$800 million for City bond issuers.
- **Taxi Medallion Loan Restructuring Program:** Advised and assisted the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission and other City agencies in negotiating and structuring the City's Medallion Relief Program to reduce the debt burdens of distressed New York City medallion owners. Resulted in more than 1,400 medallion loans being restructured saving drivers in excess of \$350 million.
- **Homeless Shelter Contracts:** Worked with the Department of Homeless Services and the Office of Management and Budget on amendments to the current form of contracts which finance shelter facilities and proposals to finance shelter facilities with City bond financing.

- **PACE Program:** Manage contractual and legal issues for the City's Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Program, which is expected to provide hundreds of loans for energy retrofits of commercial building in the City.

SPECIAL FEDERAL LITIGATION

Division Chief: Patricia Miller | Deputy Chief: Elizabeth Dollin, Genevieve Nelson & Mary O'Flynn

- **Protest Cases:** Defended law enforcement including first responders and high-ranking officials as well as the former Mayor, in the many federal lawsuits stemming from protests following the tragic 2020 death of George Floyd. The Division continues to handle 10 consolidated matters pending in the Southern District of New York (SDNY) seeking monetary and equitable relief as well as class certification. The Division is also handling more than 70 other cases filed separately in both the SDNY and Eastern District of New York covering 83 protest locations.
- **Trial Practice:** From January 2022 through February 2023, Special Fed tried 40 Federal cases, with a win rate at 75 percent.

TAX & BANKRUPTCY LITIGATION

Division Chief: Rochelle Cohen | Deputy Chief: Andrea Chan & Emily Keyes

- **Eminent Domain and Gowanus Canal Clean Up:** Acquired title via eminent domain to four lots along the Gowanus Canal. The lots were acquired for the City's Department of Environmental Protection to facilitate the building of a combined sewer overflow storage tank which the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency directed the City to build as part of the Superfund cleanup of the Canal.
- **Large Bankruptcy:** Successfully handled a case where the debtor was a Brooklyn Hotel that misappropriated funds it collected as City hotel occupancy taxes, but never paid, to the City. The City engaged in various litigations in the Bankruptcy Court which resulted in the collection of hotel and other business taxes in excess of \$2.2 million and \$2 million in delinquent real estate taxes. Additionally, the City moved to dismiss Debtor's adversary proceeding challenging the Department of Finance's denial of a tax abatement. The Debtor ultimately agreed to dismissal as part of a settlement of all outstanding tax litigation in the Bankruptcy Court.
- **Precedent-Setting Income and Excise Tax Ruling:** Prevailed in an important matter in which the Taxpayer, an out-of-state corporation holding an interest in a New York City partnership, challenged a Notice of Deficiency of General Corporation Tax (GCT) of \$4 million. The Taxpayer sold its interest for a gain – but did not pay the GCT on the gain. In a precedent-setting ruling, the Tax Appeals Tribunal upheld a lower court Administrative Law Judge's decision, and found that the Department of Finance correctly imposed the GCT on the gain, and that the imposition of GCT on the gain did not violate either the due process or commerce clauses of the U.S. Constitution. The Taxpayer contested the decision in the Appellate Division, which unanimously affirmed.
- **Real Property Tax Law:** Won in a case, after trial, in which a State court dismissed Con Edison's challenge to the State's valuation of its special franchise property in New York City. It had sought \$1.3 billion in refunds from the City.

TORT

Division Chief: Fay Leoussis | Deputy Chief: Jenny Montana-O'Connor, Lavanya Pisupati, Andrew Potak, David Santoro & Nancy Savasta | Director of Personnel Management: LaVonne Pridgen

- **Settlements During COVID:** Continued moving cases towards resolution while the State courts were not operating at full capacity. Initiated a variety of settlement projects, which, in fiscal years 2021 and 2022, resulted in almost as many settlements as in the pre-COVID era (3,330 and 3,368 respectively). Trained staff on the art and skill of negotiation, which will continue enhancing the office's ability to resolve cases through settlement well into the future. Division managers worked collaboratively with the courts to conference a substantial number of "legacy" cases, or those more than 8 years old, for resolution; this also has substantially reduced the risk of excessive verdicts.
- **Medicare Reporting:** Continued a "platinum standard of practice" via the Medicare Compliance and Recovery Unit (MCRU) regarding Medicare reporting and reimbursement. MCRU has facilitated the collection of more than \$3.5 million in Medicare reimbursements in 2022, for a grand total of \$25 million collected since 2011. Due to the sophisticated tracking and procedures implemented by the Medicare team, no judgments have been entered against the City for non-payment of Medicare settlements.

- **Comprehensive Training Programs:** Developed and delivered a condensed “boot camp” summer intern training program that addressed the key fundamentals of Tort practice. Offered a comprehensive Continuing Legal Education-accredited Tort Division Training Program for new attorneys, which provided 48 different courses over a three-month period. Provided an inclusive training program for support professionals that involved substantive lectures, workshops, and e-learning videos, along with managerial skills and leadership development courses for newly appointed supervisory staff.
- **Trials:** Prevailed in 12 trials out of the 16 that went forward in FY 22 –an impressive 75-percent– notwithstanding challenges during and after COVID that the Division has confronted.
- **Continued Efficient Workflow in Pleadings Production & Central Disposition:** Produced over 8,000 answers to lawsuits via our Pleadings Unit within the Early Intervention Unit. The Pleadings Unit is perfecting an automatic electronic creation of the framework for those pleadings that will save hundreds of hours of paralegal time annually. The Central Disposition Unit, also housed in the Early Intervention Unit, processes about 6,500 settlements for payment annually. Its staff perfected a totally electronic workflow that has kept pace despite continuing to balance post-pandemic challenges.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Division Chief: Paul Zaragoza | Deputy Chief: Levi Grosswald

- **Work on Claims:** Handled over 17,760 new workers' compensation claims in FY 2022, including assessing the compensability of claims and overseeing their administration, and provided over \$600 million in wage replacement and medical care for injured municipal employees, with total expenditures being \$648 million.
- **Hearings & Revenue Updates:** Attended and represented New York City at over 18,000 hearings in front of the New York State Workers' Compensation Board and recovered over \$9 million through New York State's Second Injury Fund and other means, including through intercompany reimbursement arbitration and third-party liens (again, all during FY 2022).
- **Client Outreach:** Counseled client agencies on updated Workers' Compensation regulations and advised them on best practices to inform those injured about the need for timely reporting and required Workers' Compensation Board deadlines.

SUPPORT DIVISIONS

ADMINISTRATION

Division Chief: Jennie Nagle-Yndigoyen | Deputy Chief: Leon Breeden

- **COVID-19 Response:** Continued helping to spearhead the Law Department's multi-pronged approach to responding to the pandemic and ensure that New York City's legal operations continued while encouraging safety for staff and residents. This included:
 - Taking the lead right from the beginning to secure critical supplies (e.g., face coverings, gloves and disinfecting products) from a variety of sources and deployed those to employees required to be in the office to provide administrative and other support. Assembled and distributed kits of Personal Protective Equipment for each work unit.
 - Coordinating and overseeing all COVID-19 remediation for all locations and continued additional cleaning protocols.
- **Encumbrance Control Unit:** Recorded 19,200-plus payment records for budget purposes, which were later uploaded to our LawManager case management system, representing nearly \$48 million in spending.
- **Personnel:** Achieved the hiring and processing of more than 350 paid and unpaid legal and support staff for 2022.
- **Payroll/Timekeeping:** Processed over 40,330 direct deposits and audited and distributed or mailed thousands more in 2022.

E-DISCOVERY

Division Chief: Sandra Metallo-Barragan | Deputy Chief: Rachel Kaufman

- **E-Discovery Services:** Provided legal guidance and technical services to support Law Department attorneys and client agencies in all aspects of the discovery of electronic evidence in litigation, governmental investigations, subpoenas and FOIL requests.
- **Empowering Attorneys:** Ensured that Law Department attorneys had the support and resources necessary to successfully comply with the City's e-discovery obligations in hundreds of active matters.
- **Defensible Workflows:** Developed and implemented standardized workflows to streamline complex processes and ensure that e-discovery at the Law Department was conducted in a defensible, consistent, and cost-effective manner.
- **Leveraging Technology:** Leveraged advanced tools and technologies such as email threading and technology assisted review to reduce the burden on Law Department attorneys and increase both efficiency and defensibility.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Chief Information Officer: Intekhab Shakil | Deputy Chiefs: Maria Rodriguez & Pervez Ahmed

- **Cisco VOIP Gateway Replacement:** Completed VOIP Gateway (Cisco Hardware Replacement) necessary for end-of-life voice over internet protocol (VOIP) devices across six office locations.
- **Enterprise Database Encryption:** Implemented Database encryption (at rest) to comply with New York City and State regulations as well as Federal ones.
- **SharePoint 365 Migration:** Migrated the Department's on-premise SharePoint application sites to the Citywide SharePoint 365 tenant.
- **60 Bay Street / Office Renovation:** Supported connectivity via our Technical Support and Network Services staffs and assisted end-users throughout the year during ongoing physical space renovations.
- **233 Broadway / Network Connectivity & IT Infrastructure:** Implemented connectivity (all physical and virtual technologies) to support the Department's new site go-live.
- **Centrify Privileged Access Management (PAM):** Completed Phase 1 of Centrify deployment for all our servers in the new domain.
- **F5 Load Balancer Migration to Virtual:** Migrated the F5 Load Balancer physical machines to virtual machines for better management.
- **Staff Action Automation:** Created an automated, email-based employee personnel action process to a workflow-based CRM application for the agency.
- **Upgrade of Servers & Database for Multiple Applications in New Domain:** Upgraded servers and databases for many existing and new applications from the unsupported infrastructure to a new secure and scalable environment.
- **Service Desk Plus Interim Help Desk Ticketing System:** Logged over 16,500 Help Desk tickets, providing premier service to agency staff.

LITIGATION SUPPORT & INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Division Chief: John Hupper | Deputy Chief: Beth Nedow | Director: Patricia DeLisa

- **Practice Management:** Began preliminary work to plan and prepare for migration to a new matter management system and upgrade of the document management system. Continued to generate 1,000 production reports on regular schedules and another 3,600 civil lawsuit checks for various City, State, and Federal prosecutor and/or investigative offices from the matter management system. Continued to publish basic case-related data about our civil litigation dating back to 1960 pursuant to the City's Open Data Law.
- **Agency-Based Discovery Staff:** Continued to provide support by conducting searches in response to discovery

requests from the Department of Transportation and the Parks Department. Continued to provide support to the Department of Environmental Protection to facilitate discovery requests and to the Department of Education to conduct searches in response to discovery requests. Also advanced the training and management of temporary staff assisting with searches in response to discovery requests.

- **Information Governance:** Continued giving wide-ranging, techno-legal advice, including on electronic retention policies.

OPERATIONS

Division Chief: Jonathan Pinn | Deputy Chief: Omer Soykan

- **Division Office:** Continued to fine-tune processes to facilitate production of well over 2,000 contact lists and reports, including the detailed Annual Report of Workers' Compensation Claims. Operations analysts helped to realize well over \$150,000 in savings by identifying and correcting nearly 1,000 invoices.
- **Communications & Docketing (CDS):** Successfully processed and distributed over 1,750 buckets of mail and nearly 11,000 critical documents in a timely manner. Also accepted and processed well over 13,000 Service of Process requests in various formats.
- **Document & Data Processing (DDP):** Successfully oversaw a nearly nine-percent rise in the number of jobs requested in 2022. The Unit also noted significant increases in the number of requests for video and redaction services. Additionally, DDP facilitated nearly 3,400 language services requests.
- **Electronic Information Group:** Reviewed over 304,000 e-mails (36 percent more than prior year) and processed well over 88,000 case file e-mails initiated by court systems, most of which contained multiple attachments to be reviewed and handled appropriately. The EIG team members also facilitated well over 2,875 requests for legal representation.
- **Process & Couriers:** Managed nearly 9,000 requests to serve, file, deliver and pick up. Onsite members scanned approximately 6,000 notice of claims packages to the Comptroller's Office and to Law Department personnel.
- **Bronx and Brooklyn:** Processed nearly 4,000 requests for a variety of operational support services including but not limited to reprographics and service of process.
- **Duplication & Finishing:** Completed over 2,600 requests, a 30-percent increase from prior year, which resulted in over 1.5 million pages printed and well over 400,000 original pages scanned for clients in 2022.
- **Training Unit:** Continued offering remote learning opportunities to larger groups of learners on subjects including: using Microsoft 365, LawManager, FileSite, Adobe and other applications. Unit members also facilitated over 10 group training sessions as well as multiple one-on-one sessions to address individual needs strategically.

SUPPORT UNITS

DIVERSITY & EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY (EEO)

Executive: Karlyne Fequiere | Deputy: Shanel Spence

- **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion:** Nurture an environment of respect throughout the agency by promoting diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) practices.
- **EEO & Reasonable Accommodations:** Ensure that fair EEO processes are available throughout the Law Department. Investigate EEO complaints and process requests for reasonable accommodations.
- **Fair Workplace:** Ensure that our office complies with Federal, State and local employment laws.
- **Diversity Plan:** Prepare and implement a comprehensive annual "Diversity & EEO" Plan to help further ongoing DEI goals in recruitment, retention and promotional opportunities.
- **Other Accomplishments:** Studied enhanced hiring and promotional review processes; conducted a "Town Hall" to increase awareness of the EEO Office and the New York City's EEO Policy; revised language access plans and services; streamlined administrative procedures; and created opportunities for high school internships.

INTERNAL COMMS & SPECIAL PROJECTS

Director: Kate O'Brien Ahlers

- **Office Internal Comms:** Launched new communications publication, *Sidebar*, to advise staff on key Law Department accomplishments and updates.
- **Special Projects:** Worked with divisions officewide on special initiatives, including Professional Development projects, Tort internal comms programs.
- **Emergency System:** Continued sharing Emergency System advisories and recommendations.

LAW LIBRARY

Director: Diana Bracho

- **Research:** Created the blueprints to reorganize the Law Library in 2023.
- **Social Media & Background Investigations:** Analyzed and preserved volumes of evidence.
- **Information Resources:** Acquired and maintained access to standard legal resources as well as analyzed new resources for procurement.
- **Training:** Offered various trainings on the newest features available in our electronic legal databases.

LEGAL RECRUITMENT

Director: Lillian Evans

- **Experienced Attorney Hiring:** Recruited 73 experienced attorneys to work in five different divisions.
- **Entry-Level Hiring:** Hired 71 recent law school graduates from 27 law schools to work in multiple different divisions.
- **Summer Program:** Hosted 46 law student interns for a paid nine-week Summer Honors Internship Program.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS & PRESS

Director: Nicholas Paolucci

- **Communication Planning:** Developed communication plans on affirmative case developments with Law Department staff, client agencies and City Hall.
- **Strategic Litigation Comms:** Managed the strategic press response to hundreds of inquiries about developments in the City's legal matters.
- **Press Events & Other Comms:** Coordinated communications, including the drafting of press releases, background materials and speeches on a variety of legal topics.

PROFESSIONAL & ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Director: June Witterschein | Deputy Director: John Campbell

- **Welcoming New ACCs:** Created and implemented multiple interactive programs carried out over many months, thus enhancing engagement of new Assistant Corporation Counsels (ACCs) and empowering them to maintain strong connections and effectively represent New York City.
- **Trial Advocacy Training:** Held in-person trials for the first time since 2019 during our interactive trial advocacy program.
- **Performance Appraisal Process:** Expanded the interview evaluation process for ACCs to ensure that ACCs could engage in collaborative conversations with their supervisors on their accomplishments and areas for future growth and development.

