FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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COUNCIL MEMBER YDANIS RODRIGUEZ, AND OTHER MANHATTAN ELECTED OFFICIALS PARTNER WITH COMMISSIONER AND CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE FIDEL F. DEL VALLE OF THE NYC OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE TRIALS AND HEARINGS (OATH) TO HOST “HOW TO RESPOND TO SUMMONSES FROM NYC ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES” AN EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY EVENT FOR UPPER MANHATTAN RESIDENTS AND SMALL BUSINESSES

NEW YORK – On Tuesday, September 26, 2017 Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez, U.S. Congressman Adriano Espaillat, NY State Senator Marisol Alcantara, NY State Assembly Member Carmen de la Rosa, Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer and Fidel F. Del Valle, Commissioner and Chief Administrative Law Judge of the NYC Office of Administrative Trials & Hearings (OATH) will host an educational event for Upper Manhattan residents and business owners which will focus on how to respond to summonses from regulatory and law enforcement agencies in New York City.

The educational event will take place on Tuesday, September 26, 2017 from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm at YM&YWHA (“the Y”) of Washington Heights & Inwood. Spanish language speakers will be on hand at the event and the event is open to anyone who is interested in attending.

At the event, Commissioner Del Valle will discuss what to do when a summons is received from a city agency, OATH’s remote hearing options which make fighting a summons more convenient since recipients of summonses do not have to go to hearings in person, and OATH’s translation services. He will also discuss the changes that occurred this summer for summonses issued by the NYPD for low level offenses as a result of the Criminal Justice Reform Act (CJRA) and the new community service option available for those summonses. Council Member Rodriguez will provide opening remarks. At the end of the program, event hosts will participate in a question-and-answer session with the audience.

This event is endorsed and supported by CUNY in the Heights, Washington Heights Business Improvement District (WHBID), Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation (NMIC), and Community League of the Heights (CLOTH), Washington Heights Chamber of Commerce, Women’s Chamber of Commerce, and the Washington Heights & Inwood Business Development Corporation.
“As the City court where nearly all City agencies file their summonses for hearings and where nearly all New Yorkers have the potential to be summoned, OATH must always be working towards ensuring that the hearing process is fair and broadly accessible,” said Commissioner and Chief Administrative Law Judge, Fidel F. Del Valle. “Partnering on informational events in our neighborhoods gives OATH the opportunity to provide residents and small businesses with important information about the hearing process and the many options that are available to them should they or their businesses receive a summons from one of the City’s law or regulatory enforcement agencies."

“"In an effort to ensure transparency and civil engagement, New Yorkers must be knowledgeable and well-equipped with the most up to date, accurate information as possible" said Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez. "Our community applauds OATH for bringing this educational program that will not only empower our constituents, but most importantly, will inspire everyone to fully interact with all levels of government. This is just the beginning of the new dynamic on civil engagement in 21st century!"

“Information is power and when New York City residents are better informed, they are empowered. I commend OATH and each of the New York City leaders involved in today’s announcement to ensure a fair, accessible and smoother hearing process for all residents,” said U.S. Congress Member Adriano Espaillat

“"It is vitally important that New Yorkers understand how to safely and effectively interact with their government. Part of making this process accessible is making sure that all languages and cultural traditions are accommodated, and by bringing education to people all around the city. I am very glad that City Hall in Your Borough is engaging the Upper Manhattan community, and look forward to facilitating other methods for government to encounter the people it serves." said NY State Senator Marisol Alcantara

“Our residents and small businesses have felt the economic toll of City-issued summonses. Adequate arbitration and education are a real solution for those who wish to resolve past summonses. OATH serves to mediate for individuals who seek to fight these summonses in a fair hearing process. Today, my colleagues and I are glad that this information is coming to our neighborhoods so that the community understands their rights.” said NY State Assembly Member Carmen de la Rosa. “We thank OATH for coming uptown to inform and serve the Northern Manhattan community about these resources and also for the opportunity to grant second chances for our business community who will now be armed with knowledge for best practices going forward.”

About OATH
The NYC Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH) is the City’s independent administrative law court where nearly all City enforcement agencies- such as the Departments of Sanitation, Buildings, Health, Parks, Environmental Protection, Fire, NYPD, TLC and Consumer Affairs, among many others- file their summonses for hearings. OATH, however, does not handle parking tickets or traffic tickets. Last year, OATH received nearly 850,000 summonses from the City’s various enforcement agencies. In 2017, the NYC Criminal Justice Reform Act (CJRA) took effect. This law made OATH the alternative venue where summonses for low-level quality of life offenses that the NYPD and other agencies
used to file exclusively in NYC Criminal Court, could be heard. The CJRA is expected to divert 100,000 cases from Criminal Court to OATH each year. An informational video about the law can be found on the OATH website. For the offenses covered by the CJRA, OATH offers the option of community service instead of a monetary fine and the community service can be completed on-site at OATH and on the same day as the hearing. For those who do not want to appear at OATH in person for a hearing, OATH offers recipients of summonses convenient hearings options such as Hearings Online, Hearings by Phone, Hearings by Webcam and Hearings by Mail. It also offers free translation services for all hearings and document/form submissions.

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