



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE TRIALS AND HEARINGS

For Immediate Release
October 15, 2020

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**THE NYC OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE TRIALS AND HEARINGS ANNOUNCES
ONLINE COMMUNITY SERVICE OPTION TO RESOLVE CERTAIN SUMMONSES
ISSUED BY THE NYPD AND PARKS DEPARTMENT**

***The Online Module Serves to Educate New Yorkers About Quality of Life Laws and
Aims to Change Behavior Instead of Imposing Financial Penalty.***

New York, NY – The City of New York’s Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (“OATH”) today announced that its “community service” educational option, which is available in place of a financial penalty for individuals who have been issued civil summonses under the Criminal Justice Reform Act, is now available online. The community service e-learning module is now available on the OATH website and can be completed from any computer with internet access. Respondents are not required to visit an OATH Hearings Division office location in order to fulfill the community service requirement and this online community service option is available in numerous languages.

“New Yorkers should know that most NYPD civil summonses and all Parks Department summonses can be resolved through an online e-learning module and these summonses do not need to cause New Yorkers undue financial hardship,” said **Joni Kletter, Commissioner and Chief Administrative Law Judge**.

“Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, OATH has quickly and repeatedly adapted to the changing needs of New Yorkers through the use of creative technological solutions. By offering an online community service option, OATH has again proven that it will use every tool at its disposal to make life easier – and safer – for New Yorkers. I commend Commissioner Kletter and her team for their continued ingenuity,” said **Counsel to the Mayor, Kapil Longani**.

The types of charges eligible for community service are those that are covered by the Criminal Justice Reform Act (“CJRA”), which was signed into law by Mayor Bill de Blasio in 2016 to reduce the number of low-level quality-of-life summonses filed in Criminal Court.

The CJRA gave the NYPD and Parks Department the authority to file summonses with OATH rather than at the City’s Criminal Court. Reducing the number of summonses filed in Criminal Court has led to a drastic reduction in the number of bench warrants issued and has consequently reduced the number of New Yorkers with criminal records for low-level offenses. The most common types of cases covered by the CJRA include Open Container of Alcohol, Illegal Consumption of Alcohol on the Streets, Public Urination, Littering, and Unauthorized Presence in Park When Closed to Public. A full list of case types that can be resolved through community service can be found on the [OATH website](#).

The CJRA also gave OATH the ability to offer community service for the first time in OATH’s history. Community service is only an option for the summonses covered by the CJRA. All other summonses have fixed penalty amounts, with the penalties established by the enforcement agency responsible for regulating the violating conditions charged and those penalties are set in law. OATH’s community service is not traditional; rather than in-person physical labor, OATH’s community service is an educational experience comprised of exercises, vignettes and quizzes. The e-learning community service model aims to reduce future offenses by trying to change the personal conduct of individuals charged with committing quality of life violations so that they understand the law that they broke and the impact of their actions on their neighbors, community and our shared environment.

In eligible case types, community service can be completed after a respondent receives a decision finding them in violation of the charges or respondents can simply admit to the summons and complete the community service e-learning module prior to the scheduled hearing date in order to avoid paying the monetary penalty for that summons.

“New York City has been a pioneer in increasing approaches outside the criminal justice system to yield a more proportionate and effective response to low level violations. Today’s roll-out of OATH’s community service online module is another step in providing an easy to access and use alternative. It will help not just to resolve low-level offenses civilly but also to change behavior for the long term. MOCJ is proud to partner with OATH and applauds Judge Kletter and the OATH staff on their vision and execution,” said **Elizabeth Glazer, Executive Director of the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ)**.

About OATH

OATH is the independent administrative law court where nearly all City enforcement agencies file their summonses for hearings. The agencies that file summonses at OATH for hearings include the Departments of Sanitation, Buildings, Health, Parks, Environmental Protection, Consumer and Worker Protection, the Taxi and Limousine Commission, Fire Department and New York Police Department, among others. OATH, however, does not conduct parking ticket hearings or hearings on alleged red light or speed camera violations. In Fiscal Year 2020, OATH received more than 700,000 summonses from the City’s various

enforcement agencies. During that time, 46% of summonses that were fought at OATH hearings were dismissed by OATH Hearing Officers.