



**2016 REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE**  
**LEGISLATURE, PURSUANT TO SECTION 112-A (3)**  
**OF THE DOMESTIC RELATIONS LAW, CONCERNING EXPEDITED**  
**CALENDARING OF ADOPTION PROCEEDINGS**

**HON. LAWRENCE MARKS**

**Chief Administrative Judge**

**January, 2017**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This report is submitted by the Chief Administrative Judge pursuant to chapter 294 of the Laws of 1993, which added Section 112-a to the Domestic Relations Law. Chapter 294, effective September 19, 1993, required the Chief Administrator of the Courts to promulgate court rules to expedite the calendaring and disposition of authorized agency adoptions in Family and Surrogate's Courts and to submit annual reports to the Governor and Legislature regarding the implementation and impact of the rules. This report documents implementation of the rules in the Family and Surrogate's Courts for the calendar year 2016.<sup>1</sup>

## **SUMMARY OF THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 112-A OF THE DOMESTIC RELATIONS LAW AND IMPLEMENTING COURT RULES**

In an effort to expedite adoptions filed by authorized agencies, the Legislature, in Chapter 294 of the Laws of 1993, added a new Section 112-a to the Domestic Relations Law. That section provides that an adoption proceeding is deemed "filed" upon receipt by the Clerk of the Surrogate's or Family Court of the documents required by statute and court rule,<sup>2</sup> as well as an "affidavit of readiness" from the petitioning agency's attorney. D.R.L. §112-a(1).

Once these documents are filed, the Surrogate's or Family Court is required to schedule the proceeding for a "review...to determine if there is adequate basis for approving the adoption." D.R.L. §112-a(2). If an adequate basis is found, the Court is required to direct the appearance of

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<sup>1</sup> Data covers the 13 terms of 2016, starting on January 4, 2016 and ending on January 2, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Domestic Relations Law §§112(2), (3), (5) and (7), as implemented in Section 207.55 of the *Uniform Rules of the Surrogate's Court* and Section 205.53 of the *Uniform Rules for the Family Court*, set forth the documents required to be submitted in an adoption proceeding, in addition to the affidavit of readiness required by Domestic Relations Law §112-a(1).

the adoptive parents and child for approval of the adoption; if not, the Court "shall direct such further hearings, submissions or appearances as may be required, and the proceedings shall be adjourned as required for such purposes." D.R.L. §§112-a(2)(a),(b). The review, appearances for approval of the adoption and any adjournments for further hearings, submissions or reviews are required to take place within time frames established by court rules. D.R.L. §112-a(3). The Chief Administrator is required to report annually to the Governor and Legislature "on the implementation of such rules and their impact upon adoptions from authorized agencies." *Id.*

This legislation was part of a broader initiative to encourage and expedite the adoption of children by foster parents with whom they have formed bonds. Chapter 294 of the Laws of 1993 also amended Sections 383-c and 384-b of the Social Service Law to require attorneys for authorized agencies to notify prospective adoptive parents promptly of their rights to commence adoption proceedings upon court approval of voluntary surrenders of children and transfers of guardianship and custody through termination of parental rights, respectively. S.S.L. §§383-c(8), 384-b(10). The agencies are directed to advise prospective adoptive parents of the procedures for adoption and cooperate "in the provision of necessary documentation." *Id.* The vast majority of prospective adoptive parents approved by authorized agencies for the adoption of children -- generally more than 90% -- are caring for such children as foster parents.

The Chief Administrative Judge promulgated rules for the Family and Surrogate's Court to implement Chapter 294, effective September 22, 1993, which generally establish a 90-day time frame for completion of authorized agency adoptions, absent adjournments for extenuating

circumstances. Section 205.59 of the *Uniform Rules for the Family Court* and Section 207.62 of the *Uniform Rules for the Surrogate's Court* require that the initial review by the court to determine the adequacy of the petition and required documentation, including the affidavit of readiness, shall occur within 60 days of the filing of the documents. If the documentation is deemed adequate and the petition is deemed ready for approval, the court is directed to schedule the appearance of the adoptive parent(s) and child within 30 days of the review. If the petition is not ready for finalization, the court must specify what further hearings, submissions or appearances are necessary and adjourn the proceedings "as required for such purposes." 22 N.Y.C.R.R. §§205.59, 207.62.

### **SURVEY OF FAMILY AND SURROGATE'S COURT PRACTICES**

The experience of the Family and Surrogate's Courts in 2016 once again underscored the effectiveness of the calendaring rules in assuring timely completion of adoptions once the required documentation has been filed. As summarized below, a survey of Family and Surrogate's Courts in all 13 Judicial Districts revealed no problems in judicial compliance with the rules, although some problems persist with respect to incomplete filings by attorneys for prospective adoptive parents and agencies, as well as delays occasioned by the need to obtain up-to-date criminal history, medical and child abuse registry information. As summarized in the following chart, 2169 agency adoption petitions were filed and 2105 were finalized during the 13 terms of calendar year 2016 in Family and Surrogate's Courts statewide; 99.5% of the adoption petitions filed were in compliance with the requirement that agency adoption filings be reviewed within 60 days; 53.5% of the finalized petitions were able to be completed within 30 days of the review and only 28.9 % of the adoptions finalized had been pending in excess of 90 days prior to finalization.

**Expedited Adoptions Report: Terms 1-13, 2016 (Jan. 4, 2016 - Jan. 2, 2017)  
SUMMARY: ALL DISTRICTS**

<b>DISTRICT</b>	<b>#Agency Adoptions Filed</b>	<b>#Agency Adoptions Finalized</b>	<b># Agency Adoptions Reviewed by Court Staff Within 60 Days of Filing</b>	<b># Agency Adoptions Finalized Within 30 Days of Staff Review</b>	<b># Agency Adoption Finalizations Delayed Beyond 90 Days From Filing Due to Missing Documentation</b>
<b>NYC: 1, 2, 11, 12 AND 13</b>	<b>1,013</b>	<b>979</b>	<b>1,017</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>428</b>
<b>THIRD</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>FOURTH</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>FIFTH</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>SIXTH</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>SEVENTH</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>EIGHTH</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>NINTH</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>TENTH</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>21</b>
<b><u>TOTAL</u></b>	<b>2169</b>	<b>2105</b>	<b>2159</b>	<b>1128</b>	<b>610</b>

The following charts provide information by county, court (Surrogate's and Family Courts) and judicial district:

**Expedited Adoptions Report: Terms 1-13, , 2016 (Jan. 4, 2016 - Jan. 2, 2017)  
Judicial District: New York City (1<sup>st</sup> , 2<sup>nd</sup> , 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>+ 13<sup>th</sup> Jud. Districts)**

<b>COUNTY</b>	<b>#Agency Adoptions Filed</b>	<b>#Agency Adoptions Finalized</b>	<b># Agency Adoptions Reviewed by Court Staff Within 60 Days of Filing</b>	<b># Agency Adoptions Finalized Within 30 Days of Staff Review</b>	<b># Agency Adoption Finalizations Delayed Beyond 90 Days From Filing Due to Missing Documentation*</b>
<b><u>Bronx County</u> Family Surrogate's</b>	<b>281 0</b>	<b>290 0</b>	<b>281 0</b>	<b>156 0</b>	<b>134 0</b>
<b><u>Kings Co.</u> Family Surrogate's</b>	<b>273 0</b>	<b>254 0</b>	<b>273 0</b>	<b>107 0</b>	<b>147 0</b>
<b><u>NY County</u> Family Surrogate's</b>	<b>250 6</b>	<b>217 11</b>	<b>250 6</b>	<b>119 4</b>	<b>98 7</b>
<b><u>Queens Co.</u> Family Surrogate's</b>	<b>136 0</b>	<b>154 0</b>	<b>136 0</b>	<b>67 0</b>	<b>87 0</b>
<b><u>Richmond Co.</u> Family Surrogate's</b>	<b>67 0</b>	<b>64 0</b>	<b>67 0</b>	<b>37 0</b>	<b>27 0</b>
<b>TOTAL: NYC</b>	<b>1,013</b>	<b>979</b>	<b>1,017</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>428</b>

\* **Most frequent reason(s) for delay in finalizing adoption:** Parents and child physicals; OCA Affidavit Receipt; Home Study; SCR Abuse Clearance; Updated Medical Info.

**Snapshot NYC-wide [Agency Adoptions Pending as of Jan. 2, 2017]: NYC Family Court: 301  
NY County Surrogate's Court: 3 (one scheduled for Feb., 2017)**

**Adoption Initiatives: NYC Family Court:** In recognition of National Adoption Month, in November 2016, each of the New York City Family Courts held designated "Adoption Days." During the Adoption Day events, a total of approximately 101 adoptions were finalized, and ceremonies recognizing the importance of adoptions were held in each county. Additionally, News12 Brooklyn covered the Kings County event and NY1 News covered the Richmond event.

**NY Co. Surrogate's Court:** Fingerprints and child abuse clearances are done as soon as possible. All adoptions are reviewed within five days of filing. Attorneys are notified as soon as the file is reviewed to let them know what documents, if any, are needed to complete the file.

**Expedited Adoptions Report: Terms 1-13, , 2016 (Jan. 4, 2016 - Jan. 2, 2017)  
Third Judicial District**

<b>COUNTY</b>	<b>#Agency Adoptions Filed</b>	<b>#Agency Adoptions Finalized</b>	<b># Agency Adoptions Reviewed by Court Staff Within 60 Days of Filing</b>	<b># Agency Adoptions Finalized Within 30 Days of Staff Review</b>	<b># Agency Adoption Finalizations Delayed Beyond 90 Days From Filing Due to Missing Documentation*</b>
<u><b>Albany Co.</b></u>					
<b>Family</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Surrogate's</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<u><b>Columbia Co.</b></u>					
<b>Family</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Surrogate's</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<u><b>Greene Co.</b></u>					
<b>Family</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Surrogate's</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<u><b>Rensselaer Co.</b></u>					
<b>Family</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Surrogate's</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<u><b>Schoharie Co.</b></u>					
<b>Family</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Surrogate's</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<u><b>Sullivan Co.</b></u>					
<b>Family</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Surrogate's</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<u><b>Ulster Co.</b></u>					
<b>Family</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Surrogate's</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>26</b>

\* **Most frequent reason(s) for delay in finalizing adoption:** Missing or incorrect paperwork. Delays in submitting the adoption subsidy paperwork and home studies are the most common; two delayed by termination of parental rights appeal by birth father.

**Snapshot [Agency Adoptions Pending as of Jan. 2, 2017]: 16** (Family Court in Columbia Co.: 6; Greene Co.: 3; Rensselaer Co.: 1; Sullivan Co.: 2; Ulster Co: 4)

**Adoption Initiatives:** Albany County Surrogate's Court has continued to develop its tracking system with control dates to expedite proceedings.

Expedited Adoptions Report: Terms 1-13, , 2016 (Jan. 4, 2016 - Jan. 2, 2017)

Fourth Judicial District

COUNTY	#Agency Adoptions Filed	#Agency Adoptions Finalized	# Agency Adoptions Reviewed by Court Staff Within 60 Days of Filing	# Agency Adoptions Finalized Within 30 Days of Staff Review	# Agency Adoption Finalizations Delayed Beyond 90 Days From Filing Due to Missing Documentation*
<b>Clinton Co.</b>					
Family	20	25	20	3	0
Surrogate's	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Essex Co.</b>					
Family	0	0	0	0	0
Surrogate's	1	1	1	1	0
<b>Franklin Co.</b>					
Family	2	2	2	1	1
Surrogate's	3	1	1	1	2
<b>Fulton Co.</b>					
Family	6	6	6	6	0
Surrogate's	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Hamilton Co.</b>					
Family	0	0	0	0	0
Surrogate's	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Montgomery Co.</b>					
Family	1	1	1	0	1
Surrogate's	0	0	0	0	0
<b>St. Lawrence Co.</b>					
Family	18	16	18	7	9
Surrogate's	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Saratoga Co.</b>					
Family	40	45	40	39	0
Surrogate's	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Schenectady Co.</b>					
Family	20	18	20	4	4
Surrogate's	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Warren Co.</b>					
Family	15	15	15	1	0
Surrogate's	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Washington Co.</b>					
Family	9	6	8	1	1
Surrogate's	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>18</b>

\* Most frequent reason(s) for delay in finalizing adoption: .appeals, delays in filing by agencies; incorrect petitions, missing documentation, adoptive parent schedules, locating parties for statutory notices.

Snapshot District-wide [Agency adoptions pending as of Jan. 2, 2017]: 19



**Expedited Adoptions Report: Terms 1-13, 2016 (Jan. 4, 2016 - Jan. 2, 2017)  
Fifth Judicial District**

<b>COUNTY</b>	<b>#Agency Adoptions Filed</b>	<b>#Agency Adoptions Finalized</b>	<b># Agency Adoptions Reviewed by Court Staff Within 60 Days of Filing</b>	<b># Agency Adoptions Finalized Within 30 Days of Staff Review</b>	<b># Agency Adoption Finalizations Delayed Beyond 90 Days From Filing Due to Missing Documentation*</b>
<u><b>Herkimer County</b></u>					
Family Court	8	8	8	8	0
Surrogates Court	0	0	0	0	0
<u><b>Jefferson County</b></u>					
Family Court	26	26	26	13	0
Surrogates Court	0	0	0	0	0
<u><b>Lewis County</b></u>					
Family Court	4	4	4	0	2
Surrogates Court	0	0	0	0	0
<u><b>Oneida County</b></u>					
Family Court	34	34	34	34	0
Surrogates Court	4	4	4	4	0
<u><b>Onondaga County</b></u>					
Family Court	50	48	50	47	3
Surrogates Court	0	0	0	0	0
<u><b>Oswego County</b></u>					
Family Court	6	6	0	6	0
Surrogates Court	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>5</b>

\* **Most frequent reason(s) for delay in finalizing adoption:** delays in obtaining adoptive parents' medical and criminal histories.

**Snapshot District-wide [Agency Adoptions Pending as of Jan. 4, 2017]:** Family Court, Onondaga Co.: 3

**Adoption Initiatives:** The Fifth Judicial District, spearheaded by Onondaga County, celebrated its annual National Adoption Day celebration at the Oncenter, Syracuse, New York on November 18, 2016. At this Adoption Day celebration, Family Court Judges from across the District finalized adoptions. The Oncenter was filled with hundreds of participants and there was significant news coverage of this important adoption initiative.

**Expedited Adoptions Report: Terms 1-13, 2016 (Jan. 4, 2016 - Jan. 2, 2017)  
Sixth Judicial District**

COUNTY	#Agency Adoptions Filed	#Agency Adoptions Finalized	# Agency Adoptions Reviewed by Court Staff Within 60 Days of Filing	# Agency Adoptions Finalized Within 30 Days of Staff Review	# Agency Adoption Finalizations Delayed Beyond 90 Days From Filing Due to Missing Documentation*
<b><u>Broome Co.</u></b>					
Family	34	34	34	1	3
Surrogate	0	0	0	0	0
<b><u>Chemung Co.</u></b>					
Family	21	21	21	10	0
Surrogate	0	0	0	0	0
<b><u>Chenango Co.</u></b>					
Family	0	0	0	0	0
Surrogate	3	3	3	3	0
<b><u>Cortland Co.</u></b>					
Family	0	0	0	0	0
Surrogate	7	7	7	7	0
<b><u>Delaware Co.</u></b>					
Family	17	16	17	7	2
Surrogate	0	0	0	0	0
<b><u>Madison Co.</u></b>					
Family	8	8	8	8	0
Surrogate	0	0	0	0	0
<b><u>Otsego Co.</u></b>					
Family	0	0	0	0	0
Surrogate	2	2	2	2	0
<b><u>Schuyler Co.</u></b>					
Family	0	0	0	0	0
Surrogate	3	3	3	2	0
<b><u>Tioga Co.</u></b>					
Family	0	0	0	0	0
Surrogate	1	0	1	0	0
<b><u>Tompkins Co.</u></b>					
Family	0	0	0	0	0
Surrogate	16	12	16	12	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>9</b>

Snapshot District-wide (Agency adoptions pending as of Jan.2, 2017): 15

**Expedited Adoptions Report: Terms 1-13,, 2016 (Jan. 4, 2016 - Jan. 2, 2016)  
Seventh Judicial District**

<b>County</b>	<b>#Agency Adoptions Filed</b>	<b>#Agency Adoptions Finalized</b>	<b># Agency Adoptions Reviewed by Court Staff Within 60 Days of Filing</b>	<b># Agency Adoptions Finalized Within 30 Days of Review</b>	<b># Agency Adoption Finalizations Delayed Beyond 90 Days from Filing Due to Missing Documentation*</b>
<b><u>Cayuga</u></b>					
Family	0	0	0	0	0
Surrogate's	22	16	22	16	7
<b><u>Livingston</u></b>					
Family	11	11	11	11	0
Surrogate's	0	0	0	0	0
<b><u>Monroe</u></b>					
Family	41	46	36	9	14
Surrogate's	9	5	9	0	9
<b><u>Ontario</u></b>					
Family	9	11	9	5	4
Surrogate's	0	0	0	0	0
<b><u>Seneca</u></b>					
Family	16	13	16	12	1
Surrogate's	0	0	0	0	0
<b><u>Steuben</u></b>					
Family	17	15	17	5	2
Surrogate's	0	0	0	0	0
<b><u>Wayne</u></b>					
Family	0	0	0	0	0
Surrogate's	17	13	17	0	0
<b><u>Yates</u></b>					
Family	0	0	0	0	0
Surrogate's	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>37</b>

**Most frequent reasons for delay:** Cayuga Fam. Ct.: pending appeals; Monroe Fam. Ct.: delay in receiving the verified schedules/home studies, pending subsidy request; Steuben Family Court: delay in receiving home studies and other documents.

**Snapshot District Wide [Agency Adoptions Pending as of Jan. 4, 2017]: 19** [Cayuga Surr. Ct.: 6; Livingston Family Ct: 0; Monroe Family Ct: 0; Monroe Co. Surr. Ct.: 4 Ontario Family Ct.: 0; Seneca Fam. Ct.: 3; Wayne Surr. Ct.: 4; Yates Fam. Ct.: 0].

**Adoption Initiatives:** Each county convened Adoption Day celebrations; Monroe and Steuben County Family Courts maintain close contact and meet with the agency adoption unit staff.

**Expedited Adoptions Report: Terms 1-13, 2016 (Jan. 4, 2016 - Jan. 2, 2017)**  
**Eighth Judicial District**

<b>COUNTY</b>	<b>#Agency Adoptions Filed</b>	<b>#Agency Adoptions Finalized</b>	<b># Agency Adoptions Reviewed by Court Staff Within 60 Days of Filing</b>	<b># Agency Adoptions Finalized Within 30 Days of Review</b>	<b># Agency Adoption Finalizations Delayed Beyond 90 Days from Filing Due to Missing Documentation*</b>
<u><b>Allegany Co.</b></u>					
Family	0	0	0	0	0
Surrogate's	12	9	12	9	3
<u><b>Cattaraugus Co.</b></u>					
Family	38	38	38	38	0
Surrogate's	0	0	0	0	0
<u><b>Chautauqua Co.</b></u>					
Family	24	23	24	17	1
Surrogate's	0	0	0	0	0
<u><b>Erie Co.</b></u>					
Family	103	113	103	34	N/A
Surrogate's	11	19	11	3	2
<u><b>Genesee Co.</b></u>					
Family	19	23	19	4	0
Surrogate's	0	0	0	0	0
<u><b>Niagara Co.</b></u>					
Family	30	21	30	20	5
Surrogate's	0	0	0	0	0
<u><b>Orleans Co.</b></u>					
Family	6	1	6	0	0
Surrogate's	0	0	0	0	0
<u><b>Wyoming Co.</b></u>					
Family	0	0	0	0	0
Surrogate's	7	7	7	7	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>11</b>

**Most frequent reason(s) for delay in finalizing adoptions:** Erie Co. Fam Ct.: Missing and out-of-date documents; lack of proof of service of surrender and termination of parental rights orders; outdated documents; foster parent issues; Erie Co. Surr. Ct.: home studies & other documents; Orleans Co. Fam. Ct.: late home studies..

**Adoptions pending as of Jan. 4, 2017:**20(Erie Co. Fam. Ct); 1 (Erie Co. Surr. Ct.); 1 (Chautauqua Co. Fam. Ct.); 5 (Orleans Co. Fam. Ct.)

**Special Initiatives:** Erie Co. Family Court: regular meetings with key personnel from Court, Dept. Of Social Services and Court Improvement Project. Orleans Co. Fam. Ct.: Clerk checks with attorneys on bi-weekly basis.

**Expedited Adoptions Report: Terms 1-13, 2016 (Jan. 4, 2016 - Jan. 2, 2017)  
Ninth Judicial District**

<b>County</b>	<b>#Agency Adoptions Filed</b>	<b>#Agency Adoptions Finalized</b>	<b># Agency Adoptions Reviewed by Court Staff Within 60 Days of Filing</b>	<b># Agency Adoptions Finalized Within 30 Days of Review</b>	<b># Agency Adoption Finalizations Delayed Beyond 90 Days from Filing Due to Missing Documentation*</b>
<b><u>Putnam Co.</u></b>					
<b>Family</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Surrogate's</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b><u>RocklandCo.</u></b>					
<b>Family</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Surrogate's</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b><u>Orange Co.</u></b>					
<b>Family</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Surrogate's</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b><u>Dutchess Co.</u></b>					
<b>Family</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Surrogate's</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b><u>Westchester Co.</u></b>					
<b>Family</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Surrogate's</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>55</b>

**Snapshot of pending adoptions as of Jan. 4, 2017:** Dutchess Co. Fam.Ct.: 15; Westchester Family Ct.: 9.

**Most frequent reason(s) for delay in finalizing adoptions:** Putnam Co. Fam. Ct.: late submission of termination of parental rights order; Rockland Co. Fam.Ct.: late submission of documents; Westchester Co. Fam. Ct.: failure on the part of either or both the Agency and adoption attorney in obtaining the necessary paperwork required to complete the court file, issues regarding notice to birth fathers and an increasing number of pending appeals.

**Adoption Initiatives:** Westchester Family Court: finalized 24 adoptions on a successful Adoption Day on Nov. 18, 2016, with entertainment by the character Paw Petrol, an arts and crafts table, and gift packages filled with books, teddy bears, etc. Rockland Co. Fam Ct.,: court attorney referee presides over permanency hearings, including those of children freed for adoption, in order to provide more efficient monitoring of permanency plans, including progress toward adoption; Dutchess Co. Fam. Ct. conducts status review within 60 days of filing and has participated in the LEAN initiative to analyze and respond to any points of delay.

**Expedited Adoptions Report: Terms 1-13, 2016 (Jan. 4, 2016 - Jan. 2, 2017)  
Tenth Judicial District**

<b>COUNTY</b>	<b># Agency Adoptions Filed</b>	<b>#Agency Adoptions Finalized</b>	<b># Agency Adoptions Reviewed by Court Staff Within 60 days</b>	<b># Agency Adoptions Finalized Within 30 days of Review</b>	<b># Agency Adoption Finalizations Delayed Beyond 90 Days From Filing Due to Missing Documentation*</b>
<b><u>Nassau</u></b>					
<b>Family</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Surrogate's</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b><u>Suffolk</u></b>					
<b>Family</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Surrogate's</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>21</b>

**Most frequent reasons for delays in finalizing adoptions: Suffolk Co. Family Court:** delays in agency submission of documents; attorney submission of documents and attorney schedules.

**Agency adoptions pending as of Jan. 4, 2017:** Suffolk Co. Family Court: 35.

**Adoption initiatives:** Suffolk Co. Family Court: finalized 25 adoptions on Adoption Day; Permanency Planning Coordinator oversees processing of agency adoptions, has e-mail or telephone contact every two to three days and convenes regular meetings with the local Dept. of Social Services to expedite timely submission of documents.

**CONCLUSION**

In 2016, in 99.5 % of its cases, the Unified Court System fully complied with the court rules requiring review of agency adoption proceedings within 60 days of filing and was able to complete 53.5 % of the cases within 30 days after the review. Once all documents have been submitted to the courts, cases are promptly calendared for finalization. These successes reflect the judiciary's continued rigorous efforts to realize the goals of the landmark federal and state legislation. Over time, these statutes are expected to expedite the movement of children out of foster care back to their own families, to adoptive homes or to other permanent living arrangements.

The intensive inter-agency efforts to bring adoptions to finalization quickly have continued to produce impressive results. As in past years, to the extent that delays have been encountered, these have

been related to the persistent problem of failures by petitioners' attorneys and authorized agencies to submit complete documentation at the outset, as required by statute and rule, including clearances from the State Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment, original documents from other states, home studies and criminal history reports from the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services.

The prompt resolution of children's cases, whether through family reunification, adoption, guardianship or other alternative, remains a priority for the Unified Court System as it implements the Federal and State *Adoption and Safe Families Acts*, the 2005 New York State permanency legislation and the Federal *Fostering Connections to Success and Adoption Improvement Act of 2008*. Continuing the legacy of former Chief Judge Kaye's "Permanency Now" (formerly, "Adoption Now") initiative, inaugurated in late 2002, the impressive data reflects a continued willingness on both a State and local level to collaborate to expedite adoptions of children freed for adoption, the vast majority of whom have not yet had adoption petitions filed on their behalf. This important initiative produced significant results state-wide, both in the short and long term, in significantly reducing the pool of children for whom achievement of a permanent stable home has been an elusive goal.

The rapid phases of child development, particularly the inexorable process by which children form vital bonds and attachments with their caretakers, as well as the critical needs of children for stability in their lives, require expeditious movement of children out of the limbo of foster care into permanent homes. In handling cases involving children, the Unified Court System is cognizant of children's unique senses of time; what may appear to be modest delays are magnified in the lives of children. The successful implementation of the legislation and court rules requiring prompt calendaring and completion of adoption proceedings, as outlined in this report, has furthered the goal of expediting these important cases.

January, 2017