

CENTER  
FOR  
COURT  
INNOVATION

A Public/Private Partnership with the  
New York State Unified Court System

WHITE PAPER

# A Decade of Change

The First 10 Years of the  
Center for Court Innovation



# The First 10 Years of the Center for Court Innovation

## Introduction

When the Center for Court Innovation won the Innovations in American Government Award, evaluators at Harvard University and the Ford Foundation cited several distinct achievements.

One was the Center's unique purpose: to make innovation—something that usually occurs episodically, if at all, within courts—an integral part of the New York State court system. Another was the Center's unique public-private structure: as an independent not-for-profit, the Center had agility and autonomy, but as the designated research and development arm of the court system it also had an insider's access to key policymakers.

Founded in 1996 by a team of planners and researchers who had begun collaborating several years earlier on the groundbreaking Midtown Community Court, the Center currently operates more than a dozen demonstration projects, produces research of national significance, and shapes the practice of thousands of practitioners and policymakers through its publications and training initiatives. In addition, the Center assists innovators across the country and around the world, helping them replicate and adapt the reforms that the Center has tested in New York.

This paper tells the story of the Center for Court Innovation, from its origins at the Midtown Community Court to its current efforts to help justice systems around the globe produce better outcomes for communities, victims, and offenders.

## Origins

In an era of swelling needs, court systems—in New York and other places—have been hard pressed to promote innovation. Devising and implementing new strategies is always a challenge, even in the best of times. Court administrators are typically hindered by outmoded technology, scarce resources, and the day-to-day responsibility of operating large public institutions with escalating caseloads. Moreover, given the public nature of the courts, there are always fires to put out, including high-profile crises that require immediate management. As a consequence, court officials can rarely engage in the kind of deliberative planning, collaborative problem solving, creative fundraising, and rigorous research that are essential to developing and testing new ideas.

The consequences of this situation are clear: all too many court systems find it impossible to break away from business as usual. The impact on public opinion is also clear: there has been a marked erosion of public confidence in the justice system and those who work in it.

The Center for Court Innovation was created to respond to these challenges. It is a research institute, a think tank, an incubator of new programs, and a training and education organization. While the Center's

model of combining research and practice has antecedents in organizations like the Vera Institute of Justice, the Center is the only one of its kind in the country: an independent unit broken out from day-to-day court administration that works to find new ways to improve how courts do business. The goals are to help courts aid victims, reduce crime, and improve public trust in justice.

While the Center works within the court system, it is administered as a project of the Fund for the City of New York, a non-profit operating foundation. Because it is not a formal part of the court bureaucracy, the Center enjoys the best of both worlds: the knowledge and access of inside operators and the independent perspective of outside observers. The Center is an on-going resource, working intensively with judges and sparking new conversations among court personnel. At the same time, the Center's freedom

**THE CENTER FOR COURT INNOVATION IS AN OUTSTANDING MODEL OF CREATIVE AND EFFECTIVE PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY IN NEW YORK STATE... THE CENTER IS A SUCCESSFUL DEMONSTRATION OF HOW COURTS CAN WORK MORE EFFICIENTLY, ENGAGE NON-TRADITIONAL PARTNERS, AND TACKLE CHRONIC AND EMERGING SOCIAL PROBLEMS.**

—CITIZENS BUDGET COMMISSION,  
WHICH AWARDED ITS PRIZE FOR  
PUBLIC SECTOR INNOVATION  
TO THE CENTER

from day-to-day operational responsibilities enables it to move quickly—testing new ideas, creating new partnerships, and raising funds from sources that have never supported the court system before, including foundations, corporations, and the federal government.

In recent years, Center planners and researchers have gone far beyond the borders of New York, helping, for instance, government leaders in Great Britain create experimental community courts and court officials in California promote problem-solving justice throughout the state. Through its national and international work, the Center spreads the word about New York's innovations, helping to solidify New York's reputation as an international leader in justice reform.

From day one, the Center's role has been multifaceted. A primary function is to help incubate new court prototypes. Often this means conceiving and building a project from scratch, a process that involves everything from architectural design and technology development to the hiring and supervision of staff. On other occasions, the Center's role is to recognize and nurture the good ideas of others, facilitating the planning of judges, attorneys, and court administrators across the state. Like ripples in a pond, the reverberations of the Center's work are felt throughout the court system. The net effect is to create an atmosphere that encourages creativity and new thinking.

What follows is an overview of the Center's main areas of work: demonstration projects, technical assistance, and research.

## Demonstration Projects

The Center’s demonstration projects are animated by a concept known as “problem-solving justice”—the idea that, rather than simply processing cases, the justice system should seek to change the behavior of offenders, aid victims, and improve public safety in crime-plagued neighborhoods.

To get a sample of the diversity of the Center’s demonstration projects, a visitor need only take the Number 2 subway line, which snakes from Brooklyn through Manhattan to the Bronx. (For a full list of the Center’s demonstration projects, see page 18.)

The tour begins in Red Hook, Brooklyn, home to the Red Hook Community Justice Center—a community court that has inspired both a PBS documentary and the interest of Tony Blair’s government. Planned, implemented, and operated by the Center for Court Innovation in partnership with the New York State court system, the City of New York, and Brooklyn District Attorney Charles J. Hynes’ Office, the Red Hook Community Justice Center seeks to re-engineer the relationship between courts and the community. The justice center incorporates local

IT IS NOT JUST AN INNOVATION  
HERE AND AN INNOVATION THERE.  
THE CENTER FOR COURT  
INNOVATION IS CHANGING WHAT A  
COURT IS ABOUT AND WHAT THE  
CULTURE OF A COURT IS.

—INNOVATIONS IN AMERICAN  
GOVERNMENT PROGRAM,  
SPONSORED BY HARVARD’S  
KENNEDY SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT

residents into every level of its operations. A community advisory board helps oversee the project, and a 50-member AmeriCorps program actively engages local residents in hands-on community service projects. The impact of these efforts can be seen in changed public attitudes about justice: before the justice center opened, only 12 percent of community members approved of local courts. Today, more than 75 percent view community court favorably.

Attempting to promote greater civic engagement is also at the heart of the Center's Crown Heights Community Mediation Center, located near the Franklin Avenue subway stop. The mediation center focuses on providing young people with the tools they need to resolve conflicts without resorting to violence.

Close to the 2 line's Borough Hall stop in downtown Brooklyn are three more Center projects: Brooklyn Mental Health Court, Brooklyn Treatment Court, and Brooklyn Felony Domestic Violence Court. The mental health and treatment courts mandate substance-abusing and mentally ill offenders to community-based treatment, monitoring compliance through frequent appearances before a judge. Those who fail in treatment or refuse to comply with court orders face the prospect of incarceration; those who succeed leave the system with the charges against them either reduced or dismissed entirely. The domestic violence court provides intensive services to victims—including shelter, financial assistance, and job training—while using rigorous judicial monitoring to ensure that offenders obey orders of protection.

The Midtown Community Court is a few short blocks from the 2 line's 50th Street subway stop. The nation's first community court, it has been credited with playing a pivotal role in the turn-around of Times Square, a neighborhood once plagued with drug dealing, prostitution, and rampant quality-of-life crime.

The Midtown Court was an idea originally hatched in a conversation between Herb Sturz, a long-time leader in the world of criminal justice in New York City, and Gerald Schoenfeld, head of the Shubert Organization, the largest owner of theaters on Broadway. Moving this idea from concept to reality was the job of founding director John Feinblatt, in partnership with key court officials like Robert G.M. Keating, the administrative judge then in charge of New York City's criminal courts.

Independent evaluators have documented that the Midtown Community Court's focus on

IN CREATING THE CENTER, WE ESSENTIALLY ADAPTED A MODEL FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR: WE CHOSE TO MAKE AN ONGOING INVESTMENT IN RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, AND WE CHOSE TO SHIELD THESE FUNCTIONS FROM THE DAILY PRESSURES OF MANAGING THE COURTS. THE RESULTS HAVE BEEN UNMISTAKABLE: THE CENTER FOR COURT INNOVATION HAS HELPED KEEP NEW YORK AT THE FOREFRONT OF COURT REFORM FOR MORE THAN A DECADE.

—JUDITH S. KAYE,  
CHIEF JUDGE, NEW YORK STATE

THE CENTER IS FULL OF SMART  
PEOPLE WITH GOOD IDEAS.

—JUDY HARRIS KLUGER, DEPUTY  
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE,  
NEW YORK STATE

low-level crime contributed to a significant drop in local street crime, including a 56 percent decrease in prostitution arrests. (For a complete look at the achievements of the Midtown Community Court, see Michele Sviridoff et al, *Dispensing Justice Locally: The Implementation and Effects of the Midtown*

*Community Court*, Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 2000.)

A quick ride north on the 2 train brings visitors to the Harlem Community Justice Center. Located on 121st Street, the Harlem Community Justice Center is testing a community-based approach to such problems as deteriorating housing, delinquency, and ex-offenders returning to Harlem following stints in prison. The justice center also includes a teen-led youth court—one of several run by the center—that seeks to use positive peer pressure to encourage young people to avoid criminal behavior.

The final stop on the subway tour is the Center's most ambitious project to date—Bronx Community Solutions. A short stroll from the No. 2's 149th Street stop, Bronx Community Solutions seeks to apply the community court model of combining punishment and help to all non-violent cases in a borough of nearly 1.5 million people. Launched in 2005 at the urging of Bronx District Attorney Rob Johnson, Bronx Community Solutions provides judges in the Bronx with expanded sentencing options, including drug treatment, job training, and mental health counseling.

In addition, offenders are assigned to community service work in neighborhoods throughout the Bronx. Bronx Community Solutions rigorously monitors compliance, sending the message that community-based sanctions are taken seriously. In many respects, Bronx Community Solutions represents the logical culmination of more than a decade of experimentation: the problem-solving approach initially pioneered in a handful of isolated experiments is now becoming part of the standard practice in New York courts.

## **Technical Assistance**

In addition to launching demonstration projects, the Center helps cities across New York, the U.S., and the world create their own innovative programs.

The Center's technical assistance work began with a boost from the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the arm of the US Department of Justice responsible for nurturing new ideas. In 1996, the Bureau of Justice Assistance awarded the Center a grant to help cities develop their own community courts. Over time, the Center has also won competitive grants to provide technical assistance in a number of other areas, including community prosecution, domestic violence, drug court, technology, and institutionalizing problem-solving justice.

The Center's technical assistance takes many forms. From 1996 to 2006, more than 1,800 visitors—including representatives from 50 countries—toured Center projects. These site visits to the Red Hook Community Justice Center, the Midtown Community Court, and other projects are structured learning experiences that provide visitors with a chance to interact

LORD FALCONER OF THORNTON, THE HIGHEST-RANKING JUDICIAL OFFICIAL IN BRITAIN, HAS VISITED THE MIDTOWN COMMUNITY COURT IN MANHATTAN AND PRONOUNCED HIMSELF “UTTERLY DELIGHTED.” ... HE CAME TO TOWN TO ANNOUNCE THAT HE WANTED TO IMPORT THE CITY’S COMMUNITY COURT MODEL TO ENGLAND AND WALES. FALCONER’S ANNOUNCEMENT MARKED THE FIRST TIME A COURT SYSTEM OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES HAS CREDITED NEW YORK WITH HAVING A MODEL WORTH EMULATING.

—*International Herald Tribune*,  
DECEMBER 17, 2003

with their peers and see new ideas in action. Notable visitors include U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno, Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer, New York City Mayors Rudy Giuliani and Michael Bloomberg, and the home secretary, lord chief justice, lord chancellor, and attorney general of England and Wales.

The impacts of these visits can be seen across the globe. More than a dozen community courts have opened in England and South Africa, and Center staff have worked with officials from Scotland, Japan, Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, and Canada on adapting the community court model.

In an effort to build knowledge in the field, the Center also sponsors roundtables that bring together academics and practitioners for

facilitated conversation about a wide range of topics, including ethical challenges facing lawyers in problem-solving courts, new responses to low-level domestic violence, and how to improve communication between criminal justice researchers and policymakers.

The Center publishes dozens of how-to manuals and best practice guides for criminal justice officials. In jargon-free style, writers from the Center cull the lessons from successful innovations and disseminate them to the field. All of the Center’s white papers are

available on [www.courtinnovation.org](http://www.courtinnovation.org), which has become one of the leading resources for court reformers. The site attracts an average of more than 33,000 visits per month.

In partnership with the office of New York State Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Judy Harris Kluger, the Center provides training and technical assistance to judges and staff working in drug courts, domestic violence courts, sex offense courts, and mental health courts. In this capacity, the Center has been part of the engine behind the remarkable explosion of problem-solving courts in New York State, which now number more than 250. The Center's role is to work intensively with court staff on the ground, helping them adapt successful programs and strategies to fit local needs. The Center's upstate office in Syracuse offers crucial support to these efforts.

In recent years, the Center has also helped organize trainings for judges and clerks in general court calendars to educate them about problem-solving principles. The main goal of these trainings has been to uncouple problem solving from court specialization, encouraging all judges to think of their work in new ways. In 2005, for instance, the Center helped convene two dozen upstate judges for a day-long training in Syracuse exploring how approaches used in problem-solving courts might be adaptable to general calendars. The training was the first of its kind in the country.

Finally, the Center works closely with technologists at the New York State Office of Court Administration in an effort to promote the use of innovative technology and support the expansion of problem-solving jus-

tice. In particular, the Center’s technology team is helping adapt elements of computer applications it has developed for problem-solving courts to a new system that will ultimately be used by all criminal courts in New York State.

## Research

One of the core values underlying the work of the Center is a belief in the importance of research. The Center understands that it is not enough to try new things. Researchers at the Center use empirical data to test whether new strategies actually work. This approach embodies the Center’s commitment to “action research.” Data from all the Center’s projects are regularly analyzed and results are fed back to staff in the field, who use the information to make mid-course adjustments.

The Center’s research department has made a number of important contributions to the field of criminal justice. For example, researchers from the Center spent three years documenting the performance of New York’s drug courts. The resulting impact evaluation found significant reductions in recidivism at all drug courts (urban, suburban, rural)—an average of 29 percent over a three-year post-arrest period. When researchers looked at just drug court graduates, the numbers were staggering—a 71 percent reduction in recidivism.

The findings, released in 2003 and reported widely around the country (including in an article in the *Sunday New York Times*), are significant because they are among the few studies to track participants in multiple drug courts over a long (three-year) study period.

Thanks to the Center, there is a growing consensus in the research community that drug courts work.

In another study, Center researchers followed over 400 domestic violence offenders from the Bronx in a randomized trial and found that batterer programs had no discernable impact on recidivism. This finding, which calls into question the standard court response to minor domestic violence offenses, could eventually lead to changes in how misdemeanor offenders are handled, not just in New York but across the country.

In another study with far-reaching implications, Center researchers explored whether problem-solving justice always requires a specialized court or if core problem-solving principles and practices are transferable to conventional courts. After interviewing judges, attorneys, and representatives from probation departments and service providers, researchers concluded that a number of principles—such as judicial monitoring and linking offenders to services—could be adapted in “regular” courts. The study, conducted in cooperation with the Collaborative Justice Courts Advisory Committee of the

OUR SYSTEM OF JUSTICE IS NOW UNDER ATTACK ALL OVER THE COUNTRY FOR ITS INEQUITIES AND INEFFICIENCIES. THE NEW YORK CENTER FOR COURT INNOVATION, INSPIRED BY THE LEADERSHIP OF [CHIEF JUDGE] JUDITH KAYE, IS SETTING THE PACE FOR REFORM.

—DAVID GERGEN,  
HARVARD UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR  
AND ADVISOR TO FOUR PRESIDENTS

Judicial Council of California, was the first of its kind in the country and has been featured in *Judicature* and *The Justice System Journal*.

Other Center research projects include an impact evaluation of the Brooklyn Mental Health Court, an in-depth study of the implementation and early results of

the Brooklyn Youthful Offender Domestic Violence Court, a study of the Suffolk County Juvenile Drug Court's effects on recidivism, a study examining the degree to which criminal defendants processed at the Red Hook Community Justice Center believe they were treated fairly, and a five-year national study with the Urban Institute and the Research Triangle Institute that is expected to shed light on which aspects of the drug court model are most important.

The Center's research into the effectiveness of problem-solving courts is featured prominently in *Good Courts: The Case for Problem-Solving Justice*. Published in 2005 by The New Press, *Good Courts* is the first trade book about the problem-solving court movement. It features profiles of Center demonstration projects, including the Midtown Community Court and

HAVING A RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT GROUP, A THINK TANK DEVOTED TO COURT ISSUES, IS CRITICAL FOR A SYSTEM LIKE NEW YORK'S. WE HAVE OVER 4 MILLION CASES SUBMITTED IN A YEAR. SO IT'S IMPORTANT TO HAVE AN ENTITY THAT IS WORKING JUST ON RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT AND DARING TO THINK OUT OF THE BOX. IT'S BEEN VITAL TO OUR SUCCESS IN DEVELOPING NEW WAYS OF DOING THE JUDICIARY'S BUSINESS. LOOKING AT THE RESEARCH, LOOKING AT THE RESULTS, THINKING ANEW—THESE ARE ALL THINGS THAT THE CENTER FOR COURT INNOVATION HAS HELPED US DO.

—JONATHAN LIPPMAN,  
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE,  
NEW YORK STATE

the Red Hook Community Justice Center, portraits of practitioners in the trenches, and a review of key research findings. *Publishers Weekly* called the book an “accessible and provocative call for change.” All authors’ proceeds from the book, which was written by Greg Berman and John Feinblatt, benefit the Center for Court Innovation. The book is already being used in graduate schools, thanks in part to a course on problem-solving justice the Center has piloted at Fordham Law School.

## Conclusion

New York is a place of constant change. The key to survival is adaptation. People, institutions, neighborhoods, and buildings find new outlooks and new uses—or vanish.

Such was the case with an old magistrate’s courthouse on 54th Street in Manhattan. In the early 1990s, a group of innovative civic leaders and criminal justice planners retrofitted the 19th century neo-classical structure to accommodate a contemporary idea: a new kind of courtroom designed to bring the latest theories about justice to bear on a rising tide of low-level crime.

But the Midtown Community Court’s most lasting legacy has not been to retool an old courthouse—or to inspire replication in dozens of jurisdictions—but to create an entirely new organization, one that today sits at the fulcrum of an international movement to make the justice system more effective, relevant, and flexible. Since 1996, the Center for Court Innovation has launched dozens of innovative judicial experiments around New York State, helped propel the concept of

“problem-solving justice” to the national stage, and counseled jurisdictions around the world in the development of groundbreaking justice experiments.

Where the Center will be in another 10 years is impossible to predict. Where it’s been, however, is clear. The numbers speak for themselves. In the last decade, the Center has grown not only intellectually, but physically. Started in 1996 with only a handful of staff, it now has 150 employees and a budget of \$15 million, much of it raised from federal and private sources that have never before supported judicial reform in New York.

As for New York’s court system, it has in operation or planning 195 drug courts, 29 integrated domestic violence courts, 27 domestic violence courts, nine mental health courts, seven community courts, and three sex offender management courts. Around the country, there are over 2,500 problem-solving courts. Problem-solving justice has been formally endorsed by the Conference of Chief Justices, the Conference of State Court Administrators, and the American Bar Association.

The Center can’t claim all of the credit for these developments, but it has been an important part of the story. The achievements are testimony to the model of the Center for Court Innovation itself: an independent organization freed from the workaday worries of the court system and yet closely allied with it; a place that attracts funding from a wide array of sources with creative ideas and entrepreneurial energy; a think tank that not only combines action with research but effec-

tively shares its knowledge through multiple mediums; a team of planners, researchers, technologists, lawyers, and social workers who don't shy away from problems but, in fact, seek them out, convinced that there is always a solution to even the most challenging dilemma.

## Demonstration Projects

**Midtown Community Court**, the first community court in the United States, was founded in 1993. The court combines punishment and help, holding quality-of-life offenders accountable and helping them avoid re-offending.

**Brooklyn Treatment Court** was the first drug court in New York City. The court's efforts to link felony drug offenders to substance abuse treatment have led to significant reductions in recidivism. In 2006, 196 drug courts were in operation or planning around the state, built in part on the Brooklyn model.

**Brooklyn Felony Domestic Violence Court** was the first domestic violence court in the state. The court seeks to improve victim safety while improving offender accountability. In 2006, there were 27 domestic violence courts in New York. The Center has also helped create dozens of integrated domestic violence courts, which bring family, criminal, and marital cases involving a single family before a single judge.

**Manhattan Family Treatment Court** was one of the first drug courts in the country designed to work with addicted parents and guardians charged with neglect.

**Crown Heights Community Mediation Center** is a neutral place that seeks to reduce conflict in the ethnically diverse neighborhood of Crown Heights, Brooklyn.

**Red Hook Community Justice Center**, a multi-jurisdictional community court in southwest Brooklyn, brings criminal, family, and housing cases before a single judge and provides on-site social services to help solve neighborhood problems.

**Harlem Community Justice Center** applies the community court model to family and housing court matters while offering a range of programs for young people at risk of offending.

**Harlem Parole Reentry Court** helps parolees returning to the Harlem community make the transition from life in prison to responsible citizenship. The court is operated in cooperation with the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services and the Division of Parole.

**Bronx Juvenile Accountability Court** provides young people between the ages of 10 and 15 with an alternative to placement in a state-run juvenile facility.

**Harlem Juvenile Reentry Network** is a community-based reentry program for juveniles returning from state placement.

**Brooklyn Youthful Offender Domestic Violence Court**

is the first court in the country to address exclusively misdemeanor domestic violence cases among teenagers between the ages of 16 and 19. A replication is currently in the works in the Bronx.

**Queens Community Cleanup**, a community restoration

program for Long Island City and Jamaica, puts low-level offenders to work repairing conditions of disorder.

**Youth Justice Board**, an after-school program for New

York City teenagers, meets over a 10-month period to study and propose solutions to public safety issues affecting New York City young people.

**Harlem and Red Hook Youth Courts** use positive peer

pressure to help young people avoid further involvement in the justice system. The Center has also tested the youth court model in the Brooklyn communities of Crown Heights and Far Rockaway.

**Bronx Community Solutions** brings the community

court model of combining punishment and help to the entire Bronx criminal court, which handles 50,000 misdemeanor cases each year.

## Milestones

- 1993**
  - Midtown Community Court, the nation's first community court, opens in the Times Square neighborhood of Manhattan.
- 1994**
  - Planning for the Red Hook Community Justice Center begins.
  - The National Association for Court Management awards its Justice Achievement Award to the Midtown Community Court.
- 1995**
  - The Midtown Community Court's computer technology takes the top prize for public sector innovation at Windows World Open 1995.
- 1996**
  - Under the leadership of Chief Judge Judith S. Kaye, the New York State Court System formalizes its partnership with the Fund for the City of New York, establishing the Center for Court Innovation as an ongoing engine for court reform. The Center is led by founding director John Feinblatt.
  - The Center helps open the Brooklyn Treatment Court, the first drug court in New York City.
  - The Center helps open the Brooklyn Felony Domestic Violence Court, the first domestic violence court in the state.
  - The Bureau of Justice Assistance at the US Department of Justice awards the Center a grant to provide technical assistance to jurisdictions around

the country that are interested in developing community courts.

1998

- The Center for Court Innovation receives the Innovations in American Government Award from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, the Ford Foundation, and the Council for Excellence in Government.
- The Center starts the Red Hook Youth Court, New York City's first peer court.
- The Center opens the Manhattan Family Treatment Court.
- Portland, Oregon, becomes the first jurisdiction in the country to adapt the Midtown Community Court model. A few months later, Hartford, Connecticut, follows suit.

1999

- New York State Chief Judge Judith S. Kaye writes an opinion piece for *Newsweek* extolling the virtues of “problem-solving justice,” one of the first uses of this expression.
- Adult drug courts across New York adopt the Universal Treatment Application, a management information system created by the Center to monitor defendant compliance with court orders.
- The Center launches [www.courtinnovation.org](http://www.courtinnovation.org), an online resource for criminal justice reformers.

2000

- The Center opens the Red Hook Community Justice Center in a renovated former Catholic school.
- U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno visits the Red Hook Community Justice Center.

- *Dispensing Justice Locally*, a book detailing the results of the Midtown Community Court, is published.
- The Conference of Chief Justices and Conference of State Court Administrators adopt a resolution in support of problem-solving justice.

**2001**

- The Center opens the Harlem Community Justice Center in Manhattan.
- The Center assists the New York court system in the development of the integrated domestic violence court model—a “one family/one judge” approach. Integrated domestic violence courts open in Westchester and the Bronx.

**2002**

- Greg Berman is named director of the Center for Court Innovation, replacing John Feinblatt, who is selected by Mayor Michael Bloomberg to serve as New York City’s Criminal Justice Coordinator.
- The Center opens the Brooklyn Mental Health Court, the first mental health court in New York State.
- The Center for Court Innovation is named one of the top 15 innovations in the history of the Innovations in American Government Award.
- The American Bar Association adopts a resolution endorsing the development of problem-solving courts.
- The United Kingdom’s lord chief justice and home secretary visit the Red Hook Community Justice Center.

2003

- British Prime Minister Tony Blair’s government announces its intention to replicate the Red Hook Community Justice Center.
- The Center releases a multi-year evaluation that documents consistent and meaningful recidivism reductions in New York State drug courts.
- The Midtown Community Court celebrates its 10th Anniversary. At a commemorative ceremony, New York State Chief Administrative Judge Jonathan Lippman declares: “I think after 10 years we can officially retire the word ‘experiment’ when it comes to the Midtown Community Court and call it what it is: a permanent part of the judicial landscape in New York.”
- The Center helps create the Brooklyn Youthful Offender Domestic Violence Court, the first court in the country to address exclusively misdemeanor domestic violence cases among teenagers.
- The Center launches the Queens Community Cleanup.
- The New York State Court System assumes full control of the Brooklyn Treatment Court, integrating it permanently into regular court operations.
- The Red Hook Community Justice Center receives the 2003 Rudy Bruner Silver Award for Urban Excellence.

2004

- The Center starts the Youth Justice Board.
- Judy Harris Kluger is named chief administrative judge responsible for overseeing problem-solving courts across New York State.

- The Citizens Budget Commission awards the Center its Prize for Public Service Innovation.
- The Center opens an office in Syracuse to provide training and technical assistance to courts in upstate New York.
- The North Liverpool Community Justice Centre, modeled after the Red Hook Community Justice Center, opens in Liverpool, England.

**2005**

- The Center launches Bronx Community Solutions.
- The Center is selected by the Bureau of Justice Assistance to serve as the technical assistance provider for its national Community-Based Problem-Solving Criminal Justice Initiative.
- The New Press publishes *Good Courts: The Case for Problem-Solving Justice*.
- The Center pilots a law school curriculum on problem-solving justice at Fordham Law School.
- The documentary “Red Hook Justice: A Legal Revolution Grows in Brooklyn” airs on PBS.
- U.S. Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer visits Red Hook.
- *The New York Times* features several Center for Court Innovation projects in a front page story about problem-solving justice.

**2006**

- The Center for Court Innovation celebrates its 10th anniversary.
- The Center releases results from a randomized trial that examined the efficacy of batterer programs.
- New York has 196 drug courts, 29 integrated domestic violence courts, 27 domestic violence courts, nine

mental health courts, seven community courts, and three sex offender management courts.

- Thirty community courts are in operation around the country.
- Community courts open or are in the process of being developed in South Africa, New Zealand, Scotland, Ireland, Canada, Australia, and England and Wales.





## **Center for Court Innovation**

The winner of an Innovations in American Government Award from the Ford Foundation and Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, the Center for Court Innovation is a unique public-private partnership that promotes new thinking about how courts and criminal justice agencies can aid victims, change the behavior of offenders, and strengthen communities.

In New York, the Center functions as the state court system's independent research and development arm, creating demonstration projects that test new approaches to problems that have resisted conventional solutions. The Center's problem-solving courts include the nation's first community court (Midtown Community Court), as well as drug courts, domestic violence courts, youth courts, mental health courts, and others.

Beyond New York, the Center disseminates the lessons learned from its experiments, helping justice systems across the country and the world launch their own problem-solving innovations. The Center contributes to the conversation about justice through a variety of written products, including books, journal articles, and white papers like this one. The Center also provides hands-on technical assistance, advising reformers across the globe. Current areas of interest include problem-solving justice, community justice, technology, drug treatment, domestic violence, mental illness, and research/evaluation.

**For more information, call 212 397 3050 or e-mail [info@courtinnovation.org](mailto:info@courtinnovation.org).**

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C E N T E R

F O R

C O U R T

I N N O V A T I O N

A Public/Private Partnership with the  
New York State Unified Court System