

HARLEM COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTER: DOCUMENTED RESULTS

The Harlem Community Justice Center is a multi-jurisdictional community court that seeks to solve local problems, including youth crime, landlord-tenant disputes, and the challenges of parolees reentering the East Harlem neighborhood. The Justice Center helps local landlords and tenants to resolve conflicts and access financial support; provides services for at-risk young people, and offers reentry programs for ex-offenders. Notable results include:

- **Solving Local Problems.** Each year, the Justice Center handles roughly 8,500 cases, with a majority participating in Housing Court. More intensive programs such as Family Court, Parole Reentry Court, Attendance Court and Mediation serve smaller caseloads, delivering tailored treatments and services to participants over the course of several months.
- **Reducing Crime.** A recent evaluation of the Harlem Reentry Court revealed a 19 percent reduction in reconvictions among participants three years following release from prison.
- **Improving Procedural Justice.** A recent evaluation revealed that 92 percent of self-represented tenants felt their case was handled fairly compared to 75 percent of otherwise similar litigants who had their cases processed in the downtown, Manhattan Housing Court.
- **Preventing Truancy.** Harlem's Attendance Court, which works in two local schools, has improved attendance among participants by 15 percent improvement in school attendance among program participants.
- **Community Service.** In 2009, the Justice Center engaged 86 voluntary and mandated youths in community service-learning projects. Participants completed 1,895 community service hours, implementing service projects that included a learning component about topics such as gangs, the environment and neighborhood development.
- **Preventing Evictions.** Harlem's on-site Help Center provides services to over one thousand Housing Court litigants. The Help Center provides assistance with rental arrears, referrals for services, and information for self-represented litigants. A recent analysis revealed that, within a given year, an estimated 160 evictions are prevented through the efforts of the Help Center.
- **Further Reading (available at www.courtinnovation.org)**
 - Abuwala, R. and Farole, D. 2008. *The Effects of Harlem Housing Court on Tenant Perceptions of Justice*. New York, NY: Center for Court Innovation.
 - Custer, S., Cissner, A. and Finkelstein, R. 2008. *Public Perceptions of Neighborhood Quality of Life and Safety in Five New York City Communities: Results from Operational Data, 2004-2005*. New York, NY: Center for Court Innovation. New York, NY: Center for Court Innovation.
 - Hamilton, Z. 2010. *Do Reentry Courts Reduce Recidivism?: Results at the Harlem Parole Reentry Court*. New York, NY: Center for Court Innovation.

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Henry, K. and Kralstein, D. 2010. *Community Courts: A Review of the Research Literature*. New York, NY: Center for Court Innovation.

Karafin, D.L. 2008. *Community Courts Across the Globe: A Survey of Goals, Performance Measures and Operations*. Open Society Foundation for South Africa.

Turgeon, C. 2006. *Working Together*. New York, NY: Center for Court Innovation.

Read the Reentry Task Force blog "rethinking reentry" at: <http://rethinkingreentry.blogspot.com/>.