

Bronx Community Solutions

Launched in 2005, Bronx Community Solutions seeks to reengineer the response to low-level crime in the Bronx. By providing judges with additional sentencing options for non-violent offenders, Bronx Community Solutions reduces the reliance on short-term jail sentences and offers defendants the assistance they need to avoid further criminal conduct.

Caseload

In 2014, Bronx Community Solutions handled 9,748 cases. The most frequent disposition charges were disorderly conduct, drug possession, and trespassing. Judges in the Bronx are provided with a broad set of sentencing options for misdemeanor defendants, including drug treatment, job training, and counseling.

Reducing the Use of Jail

After Bronx Community Solutions began offering alternative sentences, the percentage of convicted misdemeanor defendants sentenced to jail in the Bronx fell from 23 percent in 2004 to 13.5 percent in 2012—a 43 percent reduction. In 2014, 77 percent of defendants at Bronx Community Solutions completed their community service mandates. (The typical standard in urban criminal courts is 50 percent.)

Engaging the Community

Working with a community advisory board composed of local residents, Bronx Community Solutions creates community service projects that target local needs. In 2014, defendants at Bronx Community Solutions completed more than 72,000 hours of service—the equivalent of over \$550,000 of labor. This includes painting over graffiti, shoveling snow, and cleaning parks.

Bronx Community Solutions also brings together local residents and criminal justice system players for special events designed to raise awareness and promote discussion.

Helping Adolescents

In 2014, Bronx Community Solutions handled 758 cases involving 16- and 17-year-old defendants as part of the New York court system's Adolescent Diversion Program. The goal is to address the unique needs of adolescent defendants by offering social services and alternative dispositions that eliminate the consequences of adult criminal convictions. In 2014, 77 percent of adolescent defendants successfully completed their social or community service mandates.

Addressing Human Trafficking

Bronx Community Solutions seeks to break the cycle of exploitation and arrest for victims of trafficking. The goal is to link participants with services, including mental health counseling and drug treatment. Typically, charges will be dismissed following completion of services. In 2014, Bronx Community Solutions handled more than 200 cases involving victims of trafficking.

Improving Mental Health

With support from the New York City Mayor's Office, Bronx Community Solutions seeks to ensure that those with mental health needs receive counseling and referrals to voluntary community-based services. A 2015 evaluation found that clients who received a mental health intervention from Bronx Community Solutions were significantly less likely to be rearrested than those who received no intervention. For women, the impact of the intervention was especially pronounced, with rearrest rates that were 21 percent lower.