

Brooklyn Justice Initiatives

Brooklyn Justice Initiatives seeks to forge a new response to misdemeanor and non-violent felony defendants in Kings County, New York. Launched in August 2013, and operating out of Kings County Criminal Court, Brooklyn Justice Initiatives is staffed by a team of court-based social workers, case managers, and court liaisons. By providing meaningful pre-trial supervised release and post-conviction sentencing options, Brooklyn Justice Initiatives seeks to use an arrest as a window of opportunity to change the direction of a defendant's life and avoid the harmful effects of incarceration.

Adolescent and Young Adult Diversion Programs (APY2)

This alternative to incarceration program serves all misdemeanor defendants ages 16-24 boroughwide. Brooklyn Justice Initiative's young adult alternatives to incarceration program offers a broad range of alternative sentencing options, including on-site services and referrals to community-based services including, but not limited to: mental health, drug treatment, education, employment and job training. The goal of the programs is to increase the availability of social services and community-based programs for adolescent and young adult offenders and reduce the use of traditional cases dispositions.

Court-Based Intervention and Resource Team (CIRT)

A study issued in 2012 by The Council of State Governments found that defendants with mental health needs comprise over one-third of inmates in New York City Department of Correction custody, with the number growing. The study also found that defendants with mental health needs remain in jail roughly twice as long as those without mental health needs, after controlling for charges, bail amounts and demographic information. In response, the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, in collaboration with the New

York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), collectively referred to as the City, together with Department of Correction (DOC) created the Court-based Intervention and Resource Team (CIRT). With one CIRT operating in each of the five boroughs, the Center for Court Innovation, along with the Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services (CASES), has been contracted by the City to serve as the Brooklyn CIRT provider.

Court-based Intervention and Resource Team offers both alternative-to detention (ATD) options pre-plea, as well as expanding upon the array of currently available alternative-to-incarceration (ATI) post-plea options in Brooklyn. By serving individuals with diverse mental health needs who can be safely supervised in the community during the pendency of their criminal case and/or as an alternative sentence upon conviction without compromise to public safety, CIRT aims to reduce the length of stay for mentally ill defendants on Rikers Island.

Brooklyn CIRT offers various services including mental health and substance use assessment, treatment plan development, onsite individual case management/group services, on-site psychiatric services, linkages to appropriate

community-based treatment service providers and court compliance monitoring and reporting.

Human Trafficking Intervention Part (AP8)

Launched in October 2014, the human trafficking intervention part handles prostitution cases and provides services to help sex trafficking victims from the cycle of exploitation and arrest. Clinicians provided a trauma-informed and strengths-based approach to help individuals in prostitution safely exit by identifying victims of trafficking and addressing complex needs in order to stop the cycle of rearrest and revictimization. Programming begins with a thorough psychosocial assessment to determine a client's needs. Based on the assessment and discussion with the client, onsite short-term individual counseling sessions and referrals to community based services are provided. Referrals include culturally competent services for trans-women and foreign-born individuals, civil legal services, shelter, educational and vocational programs, outpatient counseling services, drug treatment and mental health services.

Pretrial Supervised Release Program

In his 2013 State of the Judiciary address, New York State Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman highlighted the need for bail reform in New York. Among other ideas, the chief judge sought to develop a supervised release program that would reduce reliance on pre-trial detention for misdemeanor defendants, minimizing the negative impact of detention on individual lives while enhancing the justice system's fairness.

Brooklyn Justice Initiatives seeks to fulfill this mandate, ensuring misdemeanor defendants' return to court by replacing detention with vigorous monitoring and links to voluntary services.

Participants are recruited from the pool of non-felony defendants in Kings County who have bail set at arraignment and are unable to pay. Upon referral to Brooklyn Justice Initiatives, each participant undergoes a screening process and is connected to a program case manager. The program offers on-going supervision and case management, for eligible defendants until a disposition is reached. All participants can be referred to voluntary programming offered by a network of community-based service providers including job training, drug treatment, mental health counseling. Participants are screened for eligibility in arraignment parts, as well as on subsequent adjourn dates.

For More Information

Contact Jessica Kay at jkay@nycourts.gov

May 2015