

Diverting Shoplifters

Emily Gold
Center for Court Innovation

Shoplifting Basics

- “Opportunistic” shoplifting vs. Organized Retail Crime (ORC)
- Equal opportunity offense
- Private sector: Over \$35 billion per year in “shrinkage”
- Public sector: \$2,100 per arrest
+ cost of prosecution, defense, and courts
- Shoplifters report being caught 1 out of every 48 offenses.



Retailer Perceptions

- Shoplifting is not a “victimless crime.”
- For most retailers, traditional prosecution is seen as the preferred (or only) form of accountability.
- But the threat of civil liability may influence their policies concerning who to apprehend and who to prosecute.

Enhancing Diversion: **4 opportunities for community courts**

Opportunity #1: New Referral Streams

Are there new, creative entry points to community court?



Opportunity #2: Offender Assessment

How can referring agencies match offenders with the appropriate response?

Applying evidence-based practices:

- Assessing risk (the risk that the offender will reoffend)
- Assessing needs (the offender-specific needs that an appropriate intervention should address)

Opportunity #3: Involving the Retailer

What role can retailers play in the diversion process?

Possible involvement:

- Participating in offender intervention programs
- Attending trainings about diversionary responses
- Information & resource sharing

Opportunity #4: Program Evaluation

How can programs demonstrate their value?

- Reduced recidivism and increased cost-savings are everyone's favorites.
- Additional performance metrics:
 - Decreased calls for service and decreased response times
 - Increased offender compliance rates
 - Increased rates of payment of restitution and/or civil recovery
 - Improved perceptions of fairness among offenders

For more information

