

Results

Researchers have documented that the Center for Court Innovation and its operating projects have helped to enhance the fairness of the justice system, change the behavior of offenders, and improve safety in crime-plagued neighborhoods.

Reducing Crime

Independent evaluators documented that prostitution arrests dropped by 56 percent after the Center's Midtown Community Court opened in Manhattan.¹ In southwest Brooklyn, independent evaluators have documented sustained reductions in local arrests since the opening of the Red Hook Community Justice Center.²

Reducing Incarceration

Bronx Community Solutions, which seeks to combine punishment and help for misdemeanor offenders, has cut the use of jail by a third and doubled the use of community-based alternatives in the Bronx.³ The Red Hook Community Justice Center reduced the number of offenders receiving jail sentences by 35 percent.⁴

Reducing Recidivism

Participants in the Red Hook Community Justice Center were less likely to re-offend than comparable offenders who went through conventional courts.⁵ Participants in the Center's Brooklyn Treatment Court, which offers judicially-monitored drug treatment instead of incarceration, re-offend at a rate that is 27 percent lower than offenders who go through conventional courts.⁶

Preventing Violence

The Center works to prevent gun violence in Crown Heights, Brownsville, and the South Bronx. Research documented that gun violence is 20 percent lower in Crown Heights when

compared to the upward trend in the surrounding precincts.⁷

Repairing Disorder

Both the Midtown Community Court and Red Hook Community Justice Center sentence low-level offenders to repair conditions of disorder—fixing broken windows, cleaning local parks, painting over graffiti. Each year, the two projects contribute 75,000 hours of community service—more than \$600,000 worth of labor. Compliance rates for community service are consistently higher than the national average.⁸

Improving Public Trust in Government

Ninety-four percent of residents in the area served by the Red Hook Community Justice Center expressed positive feelings about having a community court in their neighborhood.⁹ From 1997 to 2001—the year after the Red Hook Community Justice Center opened—positive views of the justice system more than doubled among community members.¹⁰ Furthermore, perceptions of nighttime safety significantly increased: the percentage of respondents reportedly feeling “safe” or “very safe” on the street rose from 40 to 62 percent.¹¹ Moreover, a survey of defendants at the Justice Center found that 86 percent said that their case was handled fairly—a result that was consistent regardless of race, gender, or educational background.¹²

Improving Victim Safety

New York's 75 domestic violence courts—based on a model created by the Center for Court

Innovation—handle over 32,000 cases each year, linking victims to counseling, shelter, and other services while strengthening the monitoring of those accused of battering. These specialized domestic violence courts significantly reduce re-offense among convicted offenders and increase both conviction and incarceration among male offenders.¹³ The state’s Integrated Domestic Violence Courts have improved the victim experience of the justice system by significantly reducing the number of trips to court litigants must make.¹⁴

Promoting Reentry

The Center’s Harlem Community Justice Center helps parolees transition back to the neighborhood following incarceration by providing community-based services and intensive monitoring. The program has helped to reduce crime: participants are re-convicted at a rate that is 19 percent lower than a comparison group on standard parole.¹⁵

Enhancing Mental Health

The Center’s Brooklyn Mental Health Court, which offers long-term treatment to mentally-ill individuals instead of incarceration, has reduced re-arrests among participants, according to independent evaluators from the Urban Institute.¹⁶

Awards

The Center for Court Innovation has received numerous awards, including the Peter F. Drucker Award for Nonprofit Innovation, and the Innovations in American Government Award from Harvard University and the Ford Foundation. Additionally, the Center has received national prizes from the American Bar Association, the National Criminal Justice Association, Fellowship of Reconciliation, National Association for Court Management, and National Council on Crime & Delinquency.

Notes

1. The study noted that the court was one of several public and private initiatives dedicated to improving Times Square. Sviridoff, M. *et al.* (2001). *Dispensing Justice Locally: The Impacts, Cost and Benefits of the Midtown Community Court*. New York, NY: Center for Court Innovation.
2. Lee, C.G. *et al.* (2013). *A Comprehensive Evaluation of the Red Hook Community Justice Center*. Williamsburg VA: National Center for State Courts.
3. Data maintained by the New York State Unified Court System, Division of Technology.
4. Lee *et al.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. Rempel, M. *et al.* (2003). *The New York State adult drug court evaluation: Policies, participants, and impacts*. New York, NY: Center for Court Innovation.
7. Fritsche, S. and Cerniglia, L. (2013). *Testing a Public Health Approach to Gun Violence: An Evaluation of Crown Heights Save Our Streets, a Replication of the Cure Violence Model*. New York, NY: Center for Court Innovation.
8. Sviridoff *et al.*
9. Swaner, Rachel. (2010). *Community Perceptions of Red Hook, Brooklyn: Views of Quality of Life, Safety, and Services*. New York, NY: Center for Court Innovation.
10. Moore, K. (2004). *Op Data, 2001: Red Hook, Brooklyn Community Assessment and Perceptions of Quality of Life, Safety and Services*. New York, NY: Center for Court Innovation.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Frazer, M.S. (2007). Examining defendant perceptions of fairness in the courtroom. *Judicature*, 91(1): 36-37.
13. Cissner, A.B., Labriola, M., and Rempel, M. 2013. *Testing the Effects of New York’s Domestic Violence Courts: A Statewide Impact Evaluation*. New York, NY: Center for Court Innovation.
14. Katz, S., and M. Rempel. (2011). *The Impact of Integrated Domestic Violence Courts on Case Outcomes: Results for Nine New York State Courts*. New York, NY: Center for Court Innovation; Cissner, A., Picard-Fritsche, and Puffett, N. (2011). *The Suffolk County Integrated Domestic Violence Court: Policies, Practices, and Impacts*. New York, NY: Center for Court Innovation; and Picard-Fritsche, S., Cissner, A., and Puffett, N. (2011). *The Erie County Integrated Domestic Violence Court: Policies, Practices, and Impacts*. New York, NY: Center for Court Innovation.
15. Hamilton, Z. (2011). *Adapting to Bad News: Lessons from the Harlem Parole Reentry Court*. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, Volume 50: 7
16. Shelli B. Rossman *et al.* (2012). *Criminal Justice Interventions for Offenders With Mental Illness: Evaluation of Mental Health Courts in Bronx and Brooklyn*. New York. Washington D.C.: Urban Institute.