

Community Engagement

Represented by the presiding judge, program manager, and other staff, the court regularly participates in meetings with community groups ranging from revitalization zone committees to school groups and local merchants' associations.

The court regularly publishes a newsletter providing information about its activities, staff and special events which is distributed throughout the community and on the court's webpage. Back issues starting from 2004 are available to the public and chronicle the accomplishments of the court since that time.

The court works with the community on an ongoing basis to identify and select priority community service projects.

The court has an "open door policy" for members of the community to observe its operations and share their ideas and concerns with court staff.

Outcomes*

- Annual caseload: Nearly 5,000 cases
- Number of social service referrals annually: Approximately 1,000
- Average appearance rate: 90%
- Hours of community service performed annually:
Over 27,000 hours
- Hartford Community Court consistently ranks in the top five criminal courts in Connecticut for case volume, despite an overall drop in statewide crime

**2015 data*

About Mentor Courts

In 2014, the Hartford Community Court was selected for the second time by the Center for Court Innovation, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance, to serve as one of four exemplary mentor to courts around the nation.

The mentor court initiative promotes the implementation and enhancement of the community court model and the wider application of its core principles in general court calendars.

The mentor courts—which were chosen in a peer-reviewed competitive process—host site visits, answer questions over the phone or Internet from practitioners, and participate in conferences and workshops.

For more information about the Hartford Community Court, please contact Chris Pleasanton, Program Manager, State of Connecticut Judicial Branch Court Operations, Hartford Community Court and Drug Intervention Program, at (860) 756-7015 or Chris.Pleasanton@jud.ct.gov.

For more information about community courts, please visit www.courtinnovation.org or contact the Center for Court Innovation at info@courtinnovation.org.

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Hartford Community Court



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www.jud.ct.gov/external/super/spsess.htm#communitycourt

Community Courts

Community courts are collaborative (or “problem-solving”) courts that attempt to address the underlying issues that lead to criminal behavior and give justice system officials more meaningful options when handling lower-level offenses. They seek to implement new, creative approaches to community engagement; they spread evidence-based practices to link offenders to appropriate interventions; and they encourage the use of judicial monitoring to promote accountability and offer meaningful alternatives to incarceration.

Overview of the Court

Opened in 1998 as the third community court in the country, the Hartford Community Court is a collaborative effort between the State of Connecticut Judicial Branch and local authorities, including the public defender’s office and state’s attorney’s office, that seeks to address quality-of-life crimes at the community level.

The community court promotes responsibility among participants through a combination of court-supervised community service and by providing individualized social services which address issues that may be contributing to criminal behavior.

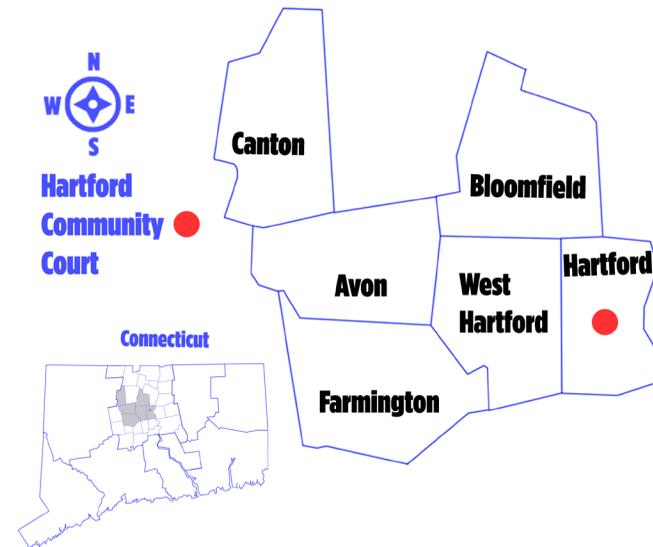
The Hartford Community Court is one of the only community courts in the United States with citywide jurisdiction for misdemeanor cases while also handling cases from five adjacent suburban communities, including Avon, Bloomfield, Canton, Farmington, and West Hartford.

Eligible Offenses

Eligible cases typically originate as a summons or arrest that is arraigned at the community court within two business days.

The court hears an array of misdemeanor offenses, including: simple possession of marijuana, breach of peace, criminal mischief, criminal trespass, larceny, disorderly conduct, threatening, prostitution, solicitation of prostitutes, illegal liquor possession by a minor, public nuisance, public drunkenness, excessive noise, and illegal vending.

Communities Served by Hartford Community Court



Social Services

Through a collaboration between the judge, the public defender’s office, the state’s attorney’s office, and the city and state health services departments, a treatment plan is created for participants with social service needs. The court’s social services team can provide referrals for drug treatment, job training, GED classes, and more.

In most cases, if participants comply with the mandated conditions, their charges will be dismissed.



Hartford Community Court participants perform community service.

Community Service

Many participants are ordered to perform court-supervised community service in lieu of being sent to jail or paying fines.

Examples of community service include maintaining Hartford’s waterfront park; sorting and packaging fresh food for the needy; cleaning litter and debris throughout the city; maintaining a local community garden; or working at a local nonprofit farm and stables.