

# Newark Community Solutions

Newark Community Solutions seeks to re-engineer how low-level cases are handled at the Newark Municipal Court in Newark, New Jersey. By providing judges with alternative sentencing options for non-violent offenses such as drug possession, prostitution, and shoplifting, Newark Community Solutions seeks to reduce the use of jail and increase public safety. Newark Community Solutions also seeks to advance the idea of procedural justice, treating defendants and victims with dignity and respect in an effort to enhance public trust in justice.

## Caseload

Each year, Newark Community Solutions handles more than a thousand cases. The most frequent disposition charges include possession of drugs or drug paraphernalia, loitering, and failure to pay court fines. Judges at Newark Community Solutions are provided with a broad range of sentencing options for misdemeanor defendants, including community service, drug treatment, and counseling.

## Community service

Defendants at Newark Community Solutions complete more than 9,500 hours of service each year—the equivalent of almost \$80,000 of labor. This includes serving food at local soup kitchens, cleaning houses of worship, and maintaining community gardens.

## Compliance

Newark Community Solutions uses rigorous judicial monitoring to hold offenders accountable. In 2014, more than 70 percent of participants completed their court mandates.

## Public trust in justice

Researchers from the Center for Court Innovation conducted a neighborhood survey to document public attitudes about issues of justice reform.

Seventy-five percent of respondents reported holding positive views of alternative sentences for low-level offenses.

## Serving veterans

Newark Community Solutions provides special services in cases involving veterans. Participants are linked with counseling, veterans' benefits, and job training. In a typical year, Newark Community Solutions serves about five dozen veterans.

## Preventing violence

Newark Community Solutions operates Newark United Against Violence, a violence-reduction program that targets high-risk young people between the ages of 18 to 30. Participants can receive case management, cognitive behavioral therapy, mentoring, job-readiness training, and educational services. Last year, Newark Community Solutions served 68 young people in this program.

## Research

Researchers at Newark Community Solutions are studying the program's impact on sentencing outcomes and perceptions of procedural justice. They are seeking to determine whether Newark Community Solutions reduces the use of jail and increases public trust in justice.