Overview

Brooklyn’s Project Reset is a diversion program offering a response to low-level charges that is proportionate and effective while avoiding the potential harms of a conviction. Through Project Reset, participants avoid prosecution by completing community-based programming. The program’s approach to misdemeanor charges holds people accountable for their actions while promoting well-being and strengthening public trust in the justice system.

Concept
Every year, thousands of people in New York City are arrested for low-level offenses. Traditionally, police and prosecutors have had only two responses to choose from: prosecution—and, in some cases, jail—or releasing people without a meaningful response from the justice system. Project Reset offers a third option: a community-based program that is impactful for participants and communities and avoids the potential harms of standard case processing.

Eligibility
Brooklyn’s Project Reset serves people who are issued desk appearance tickets for specific low-level, non-violent crimes, including shoplifting, trespassing, and criminal mischief.

How It Works
Following an arrest by the New York City Police Department, the Brooklyn prosecutor’s office reviews the case to determine if it is eligible for Project Reset. Eligible cases are referred to a public defense agency, which reaches out to potential participants to educate them about their options. Cases are then sent to Brooklyn Justice Initiatives, an independent non-profit organization, which offers people the opportunity to engage in programming rather than go to court. Those eligible may consult with a defense attorney at any point during the process.

Impact
An evaluation of 16- and 17-year-old Project Reset participants in Manhattan found that participants were significantly less likely than defendants in a comparison group to be convicted of a new crime within one year. The
study also documented faster case processing times, improved case outcomes, and positive perceptions of the program. More than 95 percent of participants said they had made the right decision by entering the program and that they would recommend Project Reset to someone in a similar situation.

**Partnership**
Brooklyn’s Project Reset is a collaboration among the Center for Court Innovation, the New York City Police Department, the Kings County District Attorney’s Office, the Legal Aid Society, Brooklyn Defender Services, and the Brooklyn Museum.

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**For More Information**
Contact Project Reset Brooklyn Program Manager Saadiq Newton-Boyd at sboyd@nycourts.gov or 347.401.9088.