

## Overview

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The Brownsville Community Justice Center seeks to improve public safety in Brownsville, Brooklyn by investing in local residents, transforming public spaces, and re-engineering the criminal justice process. The Justice Center envisions a Brownsville in which crime and incarceration are reduced, local faith in the justice system is restored, and civic life is vibrant.

The Brownsville Community Justice Center recognizes that safe and healthy neighborhoods have strong local institutions, dynamic connections among residents, and meaningful relationship with government. The Justice Center endeavors to create these preconditions for safety by strengthening Brownsville's social infrastructure, activating its public spaces, and expanding the opportunities available to young people. When crime does occur, the Justice Center works to ensure that the justice system responds in ways that are proportionate, constructive, and restorative.

Key elements of the Brownsville Community Justice Center include:

### **Youth Development**

The Justice Center offers a broad range of youth development initiatives for area young people. The goal is to link young people to positive, pro-social activities and provide them with pathways to education and employment as a crime prevention strategy.

### **Tech Lab**

The tech lab is an on-site computer room developed in partnership with the New York City Police Department to address a pressing need for educational support and workforce development amongst young people in Brownsville. The lab offers drop-in and

scheduled programming to help participants improve their reading and writing abilities, critical thinking, and other skills.

### **Reimagining Public Space**

In an effort to prevent crime, the Brownsville Community Justice Center engages local businesses and community residents in reimagining and redesigning public spaces. For example, the Justice Center initiated the Belmont Revitalization Project, which aims to transform Belmont Avenue in Brownsville into a thriving business district that is safe, accessible, and welcoming to the community.

### **Community Service**

Supervised work crews are repairing conditions of disorder in Brownsville. Projects include park clean-ups, graffiti removal, and responses to other neighborhood eyesores that are reported by community residents—maintaining Pitkin Avenue, cleaning up Betsy Head Park, and working at community gardens.

### **Alternatives to Incarceration**

Supported by an in-house clinic of social workers and case managers, the Justice Center provides judges in Brooklyn with a broad range of alternative sentencing options, including short-term social services, community restitution, psycho-educational groups, and more intensive clinical interventions. The Justice Center also

receives referrals from the Department of Probation, Crossroads juvenile detention facility, the Office of Children and Family Services, and community-based organizations.

**Probation**

The New York City Department of Probation has a team of probation officers in Brownsville as part of the Neighborhood Opportunity Network initiative. Working with probation, the Brownsville Community Justice Center connects men and women between the ages of 16 to 24 to resources such as GED and college assistance, internships, and professional training. In addition, participants complete community benefit projects, including large-scale mural projects and the construction of a community teaching garden.

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**For More Information**

E-mail: [info@courttinnovation.org](mailto:info@courttinnovation.org)