

## Community Courts

### Topic Description:

BJA in partnership with the Center for Court Innovation (CCI), under its' problem-solving courts initiative supports training and technical assistance for community courts. Community courts seek to apply a problem-solving approach to specified neighborhoods or designated cases (e.g., misdemeanors), working hand in hand with local residents, businesses, government agencies and community organizations. Research has shown that the community court model can reduce crime and substance abuse, increase services to victims, and improve public confidence in justice.

Community courts are neighborhood-focused courts that attempt to harness the power of the justice system to address local problems. They can take many forms, but all focus on creative partnerships and problem solving. They strive to create new relationships, both within the justice system and with outside stakeholders such as residents, merchants, churches and schools. And they test new and aggressive approaches to public safety rather than merely responding to crime after it has occurred.

### Recommended Tactics/Strategies for Addressing the Issue:

States should give consideration to jurisdictions interested in incorporating community court principles. CCI provides training and technical assistance to jurisdictions around the country seeking to test new community-based public safety strategies. This includes training workshops, responding to requests for assistance, hosting site visits to its demonstration projects in New York City, and making site visits to jurisdictions needing in-depth assistance. In addition, BJA in partnership with CCI has selected four mentor community court sites. These sites serve as regional mentors for justice planners in neighboring jurisdictions. BJA encourages states and local jurisdictions to ask for assistance from BJA, CCI and the mentor sites in order to learn about community court functions, assistance in implementing community court principles or for site visits to mentor community court sites.

### Available Resources:

[Community-Bases Problem-Solving Criminal Justice Initiative](#)  
[Center for Court Innovation](#)

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