

Overview

Newark Community Solutions seeks to re-engineer how low-level cases are handled in Municipal Court in New Jersey's largest city. Headquartered in the Newark Municipal Courthouse, Newark Community Solutions is a team of social workers and criminal justice professionals who seek to improve the quality of life 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. The program 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

Judges in multiple courtrooms are provided with a broad range of sentencing options including community service, drug treatment and counseling. Every year Newark Community Solutions serves over 1,200 participants charged with low-level offenses; 70 percent successfully complete their mandates. The most frequent charges are possession of drugs or drug paraphernalia and property-related crimes.

Serving Veterans

Newark Community Solutions provides special services in cases involving veterans. Participants meet with a New Jersey Veterans Justice Outreach specialist and other veterans service providers who offer individualized support to help participants connect with benefits as well as counseling, housing options and job training. In a typical year, Newark Community Solutions serves over 50 veterans.

Mental Health Initiative

In 2017, with funding from the Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey, Newark Community Solutions launched a mental health initiative

designed to provide onsite care and direct referrals to community-based providers for participants who present with mental health needs. The initiative also provides training for judges, attorneys, and court staff to help them identify the signs and symptoms of mental illness. The project tracks high need participant's progress for up to a year.

Community Violence

In 2017, Newark Community Solutions launched a victim service initiative dedicated to serving young men and women in Newark who have been exposed to violence and trauma. The goal is to provide holistic support to not only ease immediate grief and suffering, but also provide a foundation of support to end the cycle of violence. Services are provided at the Newark Community Solutions storefront Hawthorne Office in the city's South Ward.

For More Information

E-mail: info@courtinnovation.org