

CENTER
FOR
COURT
INNOVATION

ANNUAL REPORT



2010

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The Center for Court Innovation is a public-private partnership that works to reduce crime, aid victims, and improve public trust in justice. It pursues these goals in a variety of ways: through demonstration projects that test new approaches to justice; through hands-on training and technical assistance with criminal justice reformers around the world; and through the dissemination of cutting-edge research and ideas about how to improve the justice system. This report highlights some of the Center's key accomplishments in 2010, focusing on the organization's impact on the ground, in policy circles, and on the world of ideas.

ON THE GROUND

The roots of the Center for Court Innovation stretch back to the early 1990s and the creation of the Midtown Community Court, a pioneering effort to improve safety and the quality of life in Times Square and the surrounding residential communities. Since then, the Center has launched more than a dozen similar experiments, each designed to test a new approach to the delivery of justice. While each project is unique, they are all animated by a desire to show new thinking in action. Almost all of the Center's demonstration projects are created in partnership with local justice agencies. Key partners include the New York State Unified Court System, the City of New York, local district attorneys, and others. New projects implemented in 2010 include:

Addressing Gun Violence

Save Our Streets (S.O.S.) is a community-based effort to end gun violence in Crown Heights. A project of the Crown Heights Community Mediation Center, S.O.S. adapts the Chicago CeaseFire model to Brooklyn. The program provides immediate intervention whenever a shooting occurs in the neighborhood, reaching out to victims and others to ensure that retaliatory violence does not take place. The program also mobilizes local residents to send a message that shooting is unacceptable behavior. There were 75 shooting victims in the project's target area in 2010. The project was featured in *The New York Times* in December 2010 in a story headlined, "Gunfire

Will No Longer Be Met By Silence.” In the coming year, the program will expand to reach young people between the ages of 14 and 17 who have been, or are likely to be, exposed to gun violence.

Reforming the Juvenile Justice System

In Staten Island, the Center for Court Innovation opened a respite program, an intensive effort to serve 20-25 families per year with pending delinquency cases in New York City Family Court. Rather than assigning a young person to detention, respite offers judges a new option in cases where returning a young person to his or her home is either not possible or unsafe. The program allows young people to reside for a brief period with a specially-trained family, while both the young person and the biological family receive counseling and services designed to promote reunification.

The New York Juvenile Justice Corps, an AmeriCorps service program that the Center started in October 2010, consists of 58 members who work with young people at risk of becoming involved in the juvenile justice system. Members receive intensive training and serve for one year at Center for Court Innovation projects throughout New York City. Some members are also assigned to the John Jay College of Criminal Justice and the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. Members organize and participate in large-scale volunteer service events that improve community safety and pride, such as graffiti removal and park clean-ups.

In 2010, the Center also laid the groundwork for several juvenile justice initiatives that will launch in 2011, including:

BRONX FUTURES

Part of New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg’s effort to revamp the way the city works with young people in the justice system, Bronx Futures will serve as both an alternative to detention and an alternative to placement, providing mental health services to the newly arrested, those on probation, and those facing revocation of probation. The program is a replication of QUEST Futures, a project run by the Center in Queens that was officially launched in 2010 with an event featuring New York State Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman.

YOUTH COURTS

With the support of Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance, Jr., the Harlem Youth Court will expand to include referrals from criminal court, hearing the cases of young people between the ages of 16 and 18. The Harlem project builds on the model of the Center’s youth court in Staten Island, which was profiled in *The New York Times* in September 2010 in an article entitled, “Youth Justice, Administered by the Young.” A new youth court is also in the works in Brownsville. Additionally, with the help of a grant from Skadden Arps, and the advocacy of former New York State Chief Judge Judith S. Kaye, the Center will work with a select group of high schools to create school-based youth courts as an alternative to suspension, detention, and other disciplinary measures. The goal is to reduce suspension rates and build stronger, safer school communities.

Spreading Community Justice

With the support of Newark Mayor Cory Booker, the New Jersey State Bar Foundation, the Nicholson Foundation, and federal stimulus funding, the Center for Court Innovation has created Newark Community Solutions, which is poised to launch in spring 2011. Once opened, Newark Community Solutions will enable Municipal Court judges to sentence low-level offenders to restorative community service and social services in lieu of fines and short-term jail. Newark Community Solutions builds on the pioneering model of Bronx Community Solutions, which has significantly shifted sentencing practice for misdemeanor offenders in the Bronx, reducing the use of incarceration.



Photo: Gene Sorkin, Center for Court Innovation

New York City Probation Commissioner Vincent Schiraldi speaks at the official unveiling of *I Got Arrested! Now What? A Guide to the Juvenile Justice System*, the Youth Justice Board's comic-book guide to the juvenile justice system.

The Center has also begun planning the Brownsville Community Justice Center, a community court that will focus on juvenile and adolescent crime in a neighborhood that is one of the most violent in all of New York City. The Brownsville Community Justice Center has already been endorsed by New York State Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, and Brooklyn District Attorney Joe Hynes. The new community court will be modeled after the Red Hook Community Justice Center, which has been credited with helping to reduce crime and spark economic development in southwest Brooklyn. As in Red Hook, the Brownsville Community Justice Center will be a neighborhood resource center that will include a range of on-site social, educational, and health service providers, as well as a fully-operational court that will hear juvenile delinquency and low-level criminal cases.

POLICY

The Center for Court Innovation seeks to have influence on policy at the city, state, and federal levels. Working behind the scenes, the Center provides policymakers with new ideas, research, and analysis. Often, this takes the form of looking for opportunities to spread practices and principles that have been successfully tested in the Center's demonstration projects.

Juvenile Justice

In 2010, the Center promoted the expansion of youth courts throughout New York in several ways. First, the Center co-sponsored the first-ever statewide youth court conference, along with the Association of New York State Youth Courts, the New York State Court System's Access to Justice Program, and the New York Bar Foundation. Former New York State Chief Judge Judith S. Kaye addressed conference participants, who hailed from counties in every corner of the state. The Center also published *Recommended Practices for Youth Courts*, which serves as a guide for effective and sustainable youth court operations.

In June 2010, the Youth Justice Board, the Center's after-school youth development program that trains 15-20 high school students from across New York City, released *I Got Arrested! Now What?: A Guide to the Juvenile Justice System*. Board members produced this comic-book guide to the juvenile justice system in collaboration with the New York City Department of Probation, the Center for Urban Pedagogy, and graphic artist Danica Novgodoroff. The comic tells the story of one young man's experience and includes advice about how the system really works. The New York City Department of Probation has committed to providing the guide to every young person who goes through the probation process.

Domestic Violence

In 2010, with assistance from the Center's domestic violence team, the federal Office on Violence Against Women launched a new grant program designed to spur innovation among state courts responding to domestic violence. The Center was awarded a technical assistance grant to work with 21 grantees—from sites across the country, including both tribal and state courts—on developing and implementing their projects. The Center

worked with the Office on Violence Against Women and the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges to host a kick-off conference in Miami, Florida in December 2010.

Community Justice

In October, with the help of the U.S. Department of Justice, the Center for Court Innovation convened the first-ever international conference of community courts, in Dallas, Texas. The conference began with videotaped remarks from U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder, who said, “Over the course of nearly two decades, since the very first community court opened its doors in Manhattan, combining punishment with assistance has proven to be a critical strategy in improving public safety.... Community courts have been essential in guiding efforts to reduce crime, empower communities, and create opportunities. I’ve seen this first hand.... While the size and scope of our community courts vary, they have all proven the power of community involvement in strengthening public safety and public confidence in our justice system. I’m proud of the progress that we are making and of the investments we are directing to support our community courts and the Center for Court Innovation.”

In attendance were criminal justice officials from dozens of American cities as well as delegations from England, Australia, Canada, Chile, and Mexico. The conference featured a number of new initiatives that are breaking new ground. For example, Philadelphia District Attorney Seth Williams described plans to create a network of locally-based courts in the Philadelphia; Chief Justice Herb Yazzie outlined his intention to create a community court for the Navajo nation that would incorporate traditional tribal practices; and Portland District Attorney Michael Schrunk described a new initiative to co-locate a community court in a supportive housing facility for formerly homeless individuals.

Also in 2010, community courts were featured in the White House’s national drug control policy as an innovative approach to fighting substance abuse. In May, Office of National Drug Control Policy Director Gil Kerlikowske visited the Red Hook Community Justice Center as part of the policy roll-out. Kerlikowske said the Red Hook Community Justice Center exemplifies that “government can work in effective and efficient ways.”

Congress

In June of 2010, the Center held its first-ever congressional briefing in Washington, D.C. *Innovation in Hard Times: How to Reduce Both Crime and Incarceration* explored promising examples of criminal justice reform, including alternative-to-incarceration programs, reentry courts, and efforts to reduce the use of pre-trial detention. The program was sponsored by Representative Anthony Weiner and was attended by policymakers from the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. The event was moderated by Center Director Greg Berman and included James Burch of the Bureau of Justice Assistance, New York State Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman, Timothy J. Murray of the Pretrial Justice Institute, and Chris Watler of the Harlem Community Justice Center.



Photo: Gene Sorkin, Center for Court Innovation

Office of National Drug Control Policy Director Gil Kerlikowske visits the Red Hook Community Justice Center in May as part of the the White House’s national drug control policy roll-out.

Substance Abuse

The Center has played a behind-the-scenes role aiding court administrators as they have grappled with implementation challenges related to the Rockefeller Drug Law reforms and the expansion of drug courts across the state. For example, in partnership with the New York State Unified Court System, the Center launched the Education Connection in March 2010—the first-ever online learning system designed to educate judges, non-judicial court staff, prosecutors, defense counsel, and probation and treatment personnel on the key principles of drug treatment court operations. The online training provides an orientation for practitioners new to drug

courts, a refresher for more experienced drug court professionals, and a valuable guide for judges providing offender supervision pursuant to the recently-enacted judicial diversion program. Based upon the initial success of the curriculum, material was added in June to assist juvenile justice professionals assigned to handle family court cases involving youths with substance abuse issues, mental health disorders, or educational needs.

IDEAS

The Center for Court Innovation seeks to participate in the national—and international—conversation about justice reform by performing original research, convening roundtables, making presentations at conferences, and contributing to books and policy journals.

Trial & Error

In 2010, the Center continued its multi-faceted inquiry into the trial and error process in criminal justice reform. The goal of the effort, which is funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, is to change the way justice agencies perceive failure—from a stigmatizing and wholly negative force to a necessary companion and contributor to success. The effort has included roundtables, case studies, site visits, op-eds, and conference presentations.

Published by the Urban Institute Press in 2010, *Trial & Error in Criminal Justice Reform: Learning from Failure* by Greg Berman and Aubrey Fox argues that public policies cannot be neatly divided into successes and failures. The book examines well-intended programs that for one reason or another fell short of their objectives. To date, the book has received coverage in *The Economist*, *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Crime Report*, *Sentencing Law and Policy*, and other periodicals. It received an Honorable Mention for the 2010 Prose Award for Law and Legal Studies.

New Thinking

The Center continues to produce its podcast series, *New Thinking*, which introduces listeners to justice reformers from around the globe. Podcasts from 2010 included discussions with Newark Mayor Cory Booker and Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance, Jr. Other podcasts addressed problem-solving justice in Indian country, new approaches to addressing gang violence, and gender violence in Afghanistan.

Research

The Center's research in 2010 included new studies about reentry, domestic violence courts, alternative-to-detention programs, drug courts, delinquency, and problem-solving courts.

Do Reentry Courts Reduce Recidivism? Results from the Harlem Parole Reentry Court is one of the first studies to examine the effectiveness of reentry courts that help parolees make the transition from prison life to responsible citizenship through neighborhood-based social services. The study tracked and compared 317 Harlem Reentry Court parolees to a matched comparison group composed of 634 individuals on regular parole. The study found the reentry court produced a significant decrease in re-convictions, reducing re-offending by 19 percent. The

reentry court also led to increased parole revocations, likely as a result of a “supervision effect,” with technical infractions more likely to be detected due to the enhanced supervision built into the reentry court model.

What Makes a Court Problem-Solving? establishes a set of universal performance indicators against which to judge the success of specialized problem-solving courts. Supplemental indicators draw particular attention to the unique tracking needs of drug, mental health, community, and domestic violence courts. This report also seeks to assist traditional court managers by establishing a more limited set of performance measures, designed to capture problem-solving activity throughout an entire courthouse, not only within a specialized court context.

With funding from the National Institute of Justice, *A National Portrait of Domestic Violence Courts* explores the goals, policies, and practices of criminal domestic violence courts nationwide. Based on in-depth visits to select sites and a national survey completed by 129 domestic violence courts, results point to strong national con-

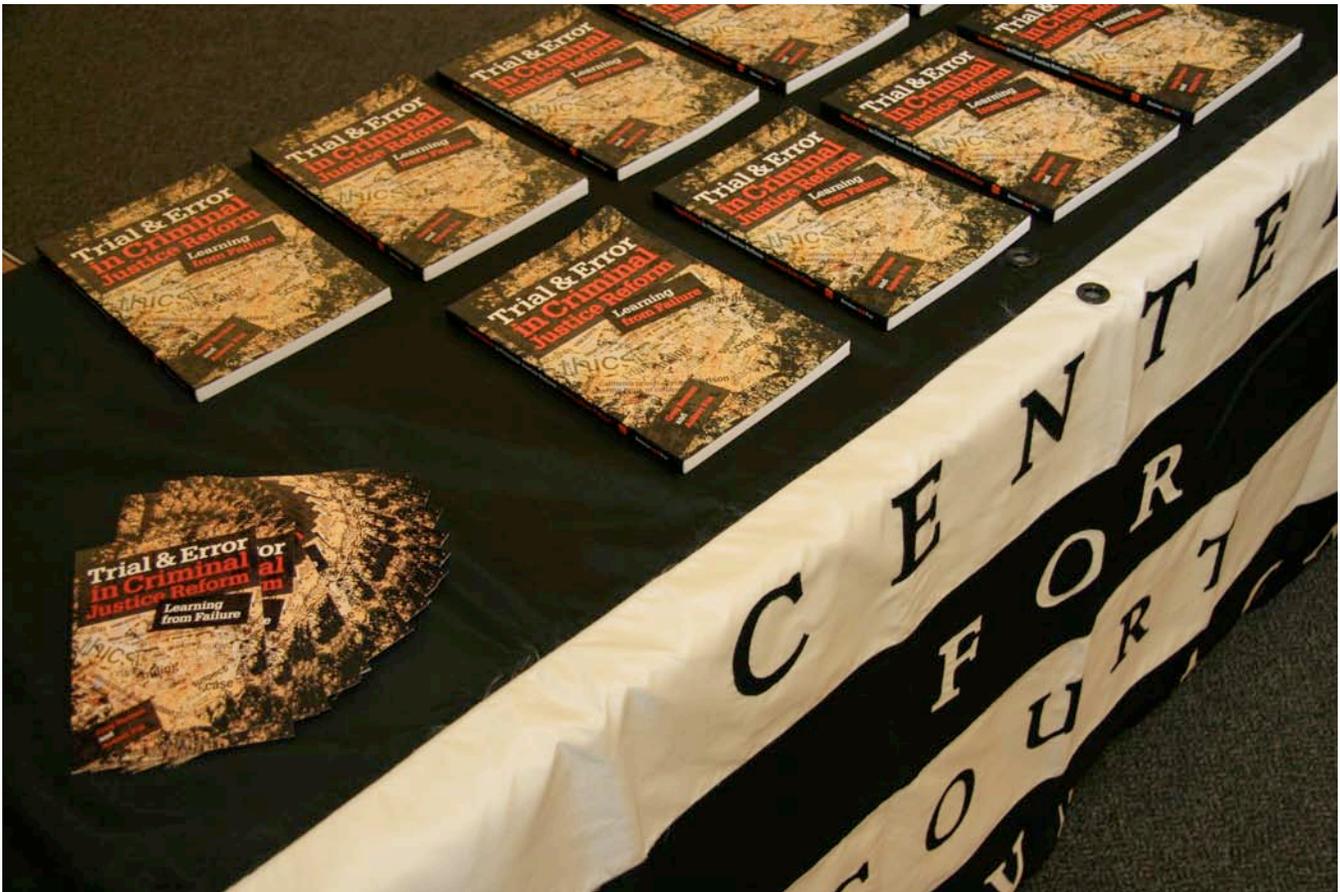


Photo: Gene Sorkin, Center for Court Innovation

Published by the Urban Institute Press in 2010, *Trial & Error in Criminal Justice Reform: Learning from Failure* argues that public policies cannot be neatly divided into successes and failures.

vergence around the fundamental goals of victim safety and offender accountability. However, the study identifies other goals about which there is less agreement (e.g., offender rehabilitation and case processing efficiency) and reveals wide variations in court policy and practice. The ultimate goal of the study is to lay the groundwork for future information exchange and cross-learning among these courts.

Drifting Between Worlds: Delinquency and Positive Engagement Among Red Hook Youth sought to understand how teenagers in a low-income and geographically isolated area of Brooklyn think about and engage in delinquent behavior. Using individual interview, focus group, and survey data, the findings show that delinquency in this neighborhood is not rooted in desires to resist middle-class values or to adopt an alternative “subculture”; indeed, many of the youths embrace middle-class cultural values. Many of those interviewed were involved in low-level crime while simultaneously working to positively change their community, thereby drifting between delinquent and conventional worlds.

Other 2010 research includes: *Evaluation of the Youth Justice Board: Impact on Alternative-to-Detention Policy in New York City, 2008-2010* is a brief evaluation of the Board's work on alternative-to-detention programs during the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 program years; *Expanding Access to Drug Court: An Evaluation of Brooklyn's Centralized Drug Screening and Referral Initiative* is an evaluation of the comprehensive drug screening and referral system launched by the Brooklyn Criminal Court in 2003; *Court Responses to Batterer Program Non-compliance: A National Survey* explored the goals, policies, and practices of criminal domestic violence courts nationwide; *Community Perceptions of Red Hook, Brooklyn: Views of Quality of Life, Safety, and Services* provides the results of a regular community survey focusing on perceptions of neighborhood quality of life, public safety, and criminal justice agencies in Red Hook, Brooklyn; and *Lessons Learned from the Implementation of Two Randomized Trials* provides lessons from two randomized trials: one testing the impact of court-ordered batterer programs in the Bronx, New York and a second testing the impact of intensive judicial monitoring in Rochester, New York.

Research planned for 2011 includes:

- *Multi-Site Adult Drug Court Evaluation*: The final report from a 6-year, 29-site study will be released in early 2011.
- *Formative Evaluation of the Defending Childhood Initiative*: This 8-site formative study involving one of Attorney General Eric Holder's signature initiatives, known as Defending Childhood, began in October 2010.
- *Multi-Site Evaluation of Specialized Reentry Courts*: This 8-10 site study will begin in January 2011 and will be the first multi-site evaluation nationwide of specialized reentry courts. It will be conducted with NPC Research and the Research Triangle Institute.
- Two new randomized trials began in late 2010: A randomized trial testing the impact of an actuarial evidence-based assessment tool on court decision-making and offender outcomes for substance-abusing offenders; and a randomized trial of a teen dating violence prevention program to be implemented in more than a half dozen middle schools in the Bronx, New York.

DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

The Center for Court Innovation uses demonstration projects to test new ideas. Since its inception, it has been responsible for helping to implement 20 different model programs:

ATTENDANCE COURT

is a truancy prevention program that provides students and their families with services and other resources in a supportive community setting in order to keep chronically absent students out of family court.

BRONX COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

is an initiative that seeks to apply a problem-solving approach to non-violent cases in the Bronx. Its goal is to provide judges with additional sentencing options for non-violent offenses such as drug possession, prostitution, and shoplifting.

BROOKLYN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURT

adjudicates all indicted domestic violence felonies in the borough of Brooklyn. A dedicated court team—judge, attorneys, victim advocates, and a resource coordinator—ensures that defendants are carefully monitored, victims have access to comprehensive services, and the judges have the information they need to make quick and effective decisions. The court has served as a model for dozens of similar programs around the country.

BROOKLYN MENTAL HEALTH COURT

is a specialized court that seeks to improve the court system's ability to identify, assess, evaluate, and monitor offenders with mental illness. The goal is to enhance public safety by ensuring that participants receive high quality community-based services.

BROOKLYN TREATMENT COURT

links nonviolent, substance-abusing defendants to drug treatment as an alternative to incarceration. After being operated by the Center during its pilot phase, the Brooklyn Treatment Court has been institutionalized by the New York State Unified Court System, which has assumed administrative oversight of the program.

CHILD AND ADOLESCENT WITNESS SUPPORT PROGRAM

provides mental health support and referrals to children and adolescents exposed to violent crime in the Bronx. The participants in the program are young people, ages 3-15 years, who have been a witness or victim of physical abuse, sexual abuse, domestic violence, or homicide.

CROWN HEIGHTS COMMUNITY MEDIATION CENTER

works to improve community problem-solving, collaboration, and inter-group relations out of a storefront in Crown Heights, Brooklyn.

HARLEM COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTER

seeks to solve neighborhood problems in East and Central Harlem. Among the many non-traditional services the Justice Center has assembled under one roof are: programs to help local landlords and tenants resolve conflicts; programs for at-risk youth, including a youth court; and reentry programs for ex-offenders returning to the community.

INTEGRATED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURTS

combine multiple jurisdictions (family, criminal, matrimonial) to improve the judicial response to domestic violence. Victims gain a greater voice in their cases and are better able to address critical family issues—such as safe visitation and timely support—that often impede safety and independence.

MANHATTAN FAMILY TREATMENT COURT

addresses the problems of children neglected by substance-abusing parents or guardians. The program has been institutionalized by the New York State Unified Court System, which has assumed administrative oversight of the treatment court.

MIDTOWN COMMUNITY COURT

targets quality-of-life offenses, such as prostitution, illegal vending, graffiti, shoplifting, farebeating, and vandalism. The Midtown Community Court sentences low-level offenders to pay back the neighborhood through community service, while at the same time offering them help with problems that often underlie criminal behavior.

NYC COMMUNITY CLEANUP

is a citywide initiative that puts low-level offenders to work repairing conditions of disorder throughout New York City. The goal is to create meaningful community service work projects that emphasize the values of immediacy, visibility, and accountability.

NEW YORK JUVENILE JUSTICE CORPS

is an AmeriCorps service program that seeks to prevent young people in New York City from becoming enmeshed in the criminal justice system.

HARLEM PAROLE REENTRY COURT

helps parolees returning to the Harlem community make the transition from life in prison to responsible citizenship. It was created in cooperation with the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services and the Division of Parole.

QUEST (QUEENS ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR TEENS)

is a community-based program that provides an alternative to detention for youths who have open delinquency matters pending in Queens Family Court.

RED HOOK COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTER

is the nation's first multi-jurisdictional community court. Operating out of a refurbished Catholic school in the heart of a low-income Brooklyn neighborhood, the Justice Center seeks to solve neighborhood problems like drugs, crime, domestic violence, and landlord-tenant disputes.

STATEN ISLAND YOUTH JUSTICE CENTER

consists of two principal components—a teen-led youth court, in which local teenagers hear actual cases involving peers, and an alternative-to-detention program, in which young people arrested for delinquency are supervised in the community while their cases are pending in family court.

YOUTH COURTS

use positive peer pressure to ensure that young people who have committed minor offenses pay back the community and receive the help they need to avoid further involvement in the justice system. Youth courts train teenagers to serve as jurors, judges, and attorneys, handling real-life cases involving their peers.

BROOKLYN YOUTHFUL OFFENDER DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURT

is the first court to address exclusively misdemeanor domestic violence cases among teenagers between the ages of 16 and 19.

YOUTH JUSTICE BOARD

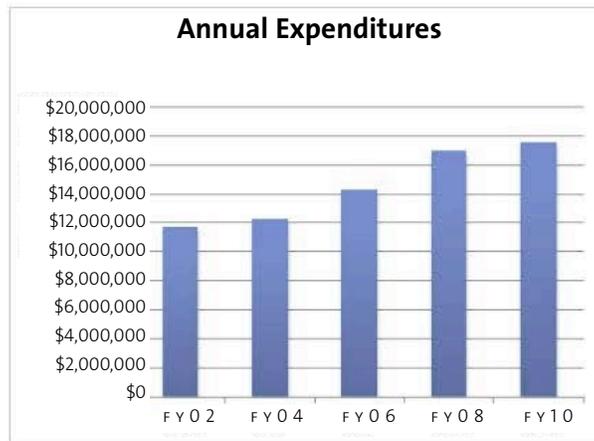
is an after-school program that brings together young people to study and propose solutions to the public safety challenges that most affect them.



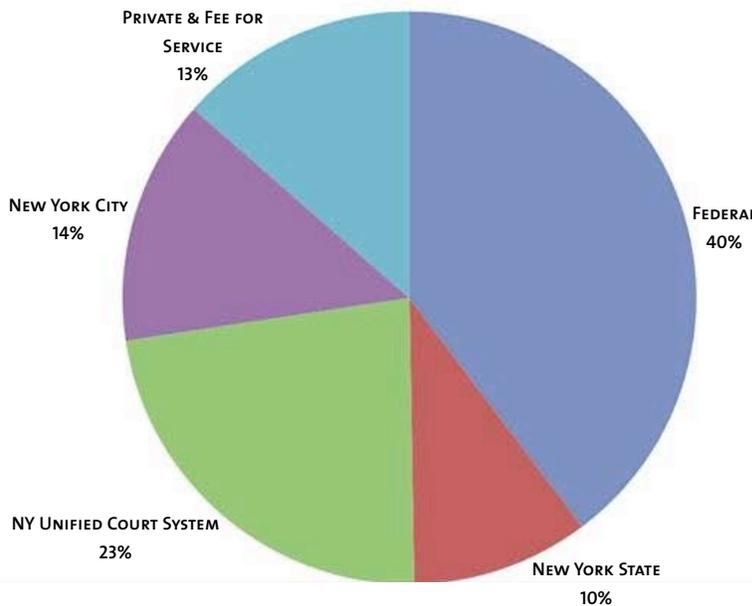
Save Our Streets (S.O.S.) is a community-based effort to end gun violence in Crown Heights.

FINANCES

The Center for Court Innovation is supported by a mix of private, public, and fee-for-service funding. The Center for Court Innovation grew moderately in fiscal year 2010, closing the year with an operating budget of 17.6 million. See below for a more detailed breakdown of the Center’s finances.



**Fiscal Year 2010
Sources of Funding
Total Funding = \$17.6 Million**



Center for Court Innovation
Fiscal Year 2010
Statement of Expenditures

Operations

Attendance Court	89,000
Bronx Child Witness Support Program	78,000
Bronx Community Solutions	1,014,000
Brooklyn Mental Health Court	401,000
Crown Heights Community Mediation Center	518,000
Greenpoint Youth Court	137,000
Harlem Community Justice Center	954,000
Midtown Community Court	1,434,000
Times Square Ink	101,000
Newark Community Solutions	310,000
NYC Community Cleanup	845,000
QUEST	568,000
Mental Health Programs	425,000
Red Hook Community Justice Center	1,277,000
Red Hook Youth Court	128,000
AmeriCorps	510,000
Staten Island Youth Justice Center	305,000

Subtotal **9,094,000**

Technical Assistance & Training

Domestic Violence Technical Assistance & Training	1,583,000
Drug Court Technical Assistance & Training	828,000
Community Justice Technical Assistance & Training	1,027,000
United Kingdom Feasibility Study	94,000
Trial and Error Project	247,000
Tribal Justice Exchange	212,000
Youth Justice Programs	416,000

Subtotal **4,407,000**

Administration, Planning, & Oversight

Project Safe Neighborhoods	578,000
Center core	827,000
Center Indirect Costs @ 9%	1,341,000

Subtotal **2,746,000**

FCNY Indirect Costs @ 9%	1,341,000
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TOTAL OPERATING BUDGET **17,588,000**

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