

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Comprehensive Forensic Evaluations for Brooklyn Felony Diversion, Manhattan Justice Opportunities and Jail Population Review

May 23, 2025

The Center for Justice Innovation is a community justice organization that centers safety and racial justice. Since our founding in 1996, the Center has partnered with community members, courts, and the people most impacted to create stronger, healthier, more just communities. Our decades of experience in courts and communities, coupled with our field-leading research and practitioner expertise, help us drive justice nationwide in innovative, powerful, and durable ways. For more information on how and where we work, please visit www.innovatingjustice.org.

Background

The Center for Justice Innovation (the Center) is soliciting proposals from qualified individuals, practices, and/or organizations to provide comprehensive forensic evaluations for potential participants identified through multiple Center programs: Brooklyn Mental Health Court (“BMHC”), Brooklyn Felony Alternatives-to-Incarceration program (“ATI”), Manhattan Felony Alternative-to-Incarceration (“ATI”) Court, and the Jail Population Review program. Vendors can apply to provide forensic evaluations across all programmatic operations.

Brooklyn Mental Health Court

Brooklyn Mental Health Court (BMHC), the first mental health treatment court in New York City, seeks to craft meaningful responses to defendants with mental illness. Addressing both treatment needs and public safety concerns, the court links defendants who have serious and persistent mental illnesses (such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder) or neurodevelopmental disorders (such as autism spectrum disorders, intellectual disabilities, and ADHD) who would ordinarily be jail or prison-bound, to long-term treatment in the community. BMHC’s goals are to link participants with serious mental illness to appropriate treatment and community-based support, while avoiding the use of incarceration whenever possible. Based out of Brooklyn Supreme Court, BMHC primarily serves individuals charged with felony offenses who would otherwise be jail or prison-bound.

Cases are referred to BMHC by judges, defense attorneys, and the Kings County District Attorney’s Office. Participants must adhere to treatment mandates, which may include mental health treatment, substance use treatment, intensive community-based case management, educational/vocational services, and supportive housing.

BMHC clinical team members conduct a psychosocial assessment for each referral received; once it is determined the potential participant will agree to BMHC program requirements, they are referred to a consulting forensic psychiatrist for further evaluation. BMHC works closely with the psychiatrist to determine the presence of a mental health diagnosis or neurodevelopmental disability, and if the participant would be an appropriate candidate for diversion, based on history and risk. Once the psychiatrist provides a written report, the BMHC clinical team develops a treatment recommendation and sends it to court stakeholders. If the case moves forward with a mandate, the clinical team connects the participant to treatment and monitors their case for the duration of their mandate.

Brooklyn Felony ATI Program

The Brooklyn Felony Alternatives-to-Incarceration Program offers individualized programming and supervision to participants facing felony charges who are not otherwise eligible for existing treatment courts. The program seeks to reduce the use of incarceration and to address an array of participant needs, including mental health, substance use, education, employment, and housing, amongst others. Brooklyn Felony ATI staff conduct clinical assessments, prepare recommendations for programming and supervision, provide referrals to community-based providers, and offer ongoing case management, supervision and compliance monitoring.

Upon receipt of a referral, staff conduct a clinical assessment using a risk-needs assessment tool that assesses risk of re-offense and identifies criminogenic needs. Based on the clinical assessment, staff determine whether the participant is appropriate for programming and whether further psychiatric evaluation is required. If further psychiatric evaluation is recommended, the clinician coordinates with a consulting psychiatrist, and the psychiatrist's report is used to determine a referral for treatment. Program staff provide an individualized service plan report to all court parties that will outline the recommendations for services and supervision that must be approved by court parties before moving forward. This includes a holistic approach to understanding a participant's needs by considering employment, housing, trauma, substance use, mental health, community support and prosocial programming.

Manhattan Felony ATI Court

Manhattan Justice Opportunities ("Manhattan Justice") seeks to rethink justice in Manhattan and to build a justice system that is more responsive to individuals' and communities' needs. Manhattan Justice is a centralized, court-based screening and referral hub that provides judges, prosecutors and defense attorneys at New York County Criminal Court and Supreme Court with a wide array of social service-based sentencing options in misdemeanor and felony cases.

Manhattan Justice partners with New York County Supreme Court, Criminal Term to work with defendants participating in the Manhattan Felony ATI Court. The ATI Court expands on the principles of specialized drug and mental health courts to create alternatives to incarceration for all types of felony cases including violent offenses. The Court is the first of its kind, providing an innovative model for other jurisdictions seeking to develop and implement meaningful post-conviction sentencing options for individuals facing felony charges.

Manhattan Justice staff conduct independent assessments of the ATI Court's prospective participants and develop individualized plans for services to address mental health and substance

use, as well as education, housing, and employment among other needs. As part of this assessment process, Manhattan Justice works closely with a consulting psychiatrist to conduct psychiatric evaluations of participants, as necessary to determine mental health needs and eligibility for services. Once participants formally enter the court, Manhattan Justice's social workers and case managers connect them to an extensive network of community-based service providers across New York City, provide ongoing case management support, and monitor participants' compliance.

Jail Population Review Program

The Center launched the jail population review program to identify possible alternatives to pretrial detention and other pathways to case resolution. This citywide program seeks to accelerate jail discharges by providing critical information about an individual to key stakeholders shortly after incarceration so that a decision about whether to divert an individual and how to resolve the criminal case(s) can be made quickly. Comprehensive, timely, and neutral forensic assessments facilitate diversion from jail or prison and allow court stakeholders to weigh the charged offense against a more thorough understanding of the individual's circumstances and can lead to both ATI and non-ATI case resolutions.

Scope of Work

These programs currently offer an array of forensic evaluations that provide legal parties with an understanding of an individual's clinical needs. Selected vendors will be responsible for conducting the following high-quality forensic evaluations and written reports for participants identified through any one of the programs. Vendors must have the ability to conduct assessments using the Center's Language Line service for non-English speaking participants. Applicants may apply to conduct any of the following assessment types for any or all of the programs.

- **Brief Clinical Assessment:** an evaluation to explore the presence of any behavioral health issues or clarify diagnostic presentation. It includes psychosocial history, trauma history, psychiatric history, substance use history, legal history, review of records, behavioral observation/mental status exam, clinical impressions (including a diagnostic formulation, if needed), and general treatment recommendations.
- **Forensic Psychiatric Assessment:** an evaluation that includes all components of a brief clinical assessment, and recommendations regarding appropriateness for alternatives to incarceration.
- **Psychological Testing:** an evaluation conducted to measure cognitive, emotional, behavioral and/or personality functioning. It includes all components of a brief clinical assessment, as well as other standardized tests to inform additional diagnostic clarification (e.g. personality disorder, intellectual disability, neurocognitive disorder).
- **Violence Risk Assessment:** an evidence-based risk assessment using the Structured Professional Judgment Approach (e.g. HCR-20) that identifies a person's potential for engaging in violence in the future, the circumstances in which violence is more likely to occur, and the interventions that can be put in place to mitigate the risk.
- **Risk Assessment for Sexual Violence:** an evidence-based sexual risk assessment using the Structured Professional Judgment Approach (e.g. RSVP-2) that identifies a person's potential for engaging in sexual violence in the future, the circumstances in which

violence is more likely to occur, and the interventions that can be put in place to mitigate the risk.

- **Risk and Needs Assessment:** an evaluation of an individual's criminogenic risk/needs and responsibility factors essential for developing an effective case management plan (LS/CMI).
- **Record Review:** a brief review of an individual's medical records to advise attorneys on their client's behavioral circumstances.
- **Mitigation Report:** an evaluation to identify the presence of mitigation factors as they might relate to the court's sentencing decisions.
- **Case Conferencing:** on a case-by-case basis, vendors will be expected to provide verbal feedback to lawyers in the presence of Center staff.

The selected vendor(s) will be responsible for providing one or more types of forensic assessments across the four programs mentioned above. Applicants should:

- Identify the specific program(s) for which they propose to deliver evaluation services
- Specify the assessment type(s) they are proposing to conduct within each program
- Describe their approach to delivering and evaluating each type of assessment
- Provide a detailed pricing proposal for each assessment type on a per-assessment rate.
- Include the following table in their proposal to indicate which assessments and programs they are applying for:

	Brooklyn Mental Health Court	Brooklyn Felony Alternatives- to- Incarceration	Manhattan Felony Alternatives- to- incarceration	Jail Population Review Program	Applying to evaluate? (Y/N)	Proposed Price (\$)
Brief Clinical Assessment	X	X	X	✓		
Forensic Psychiatric Assessment	✓	✓	✓	X		
Psychological Testing	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Violence Risk Assessment	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Risk for Sexual Violence	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Risk and Needs Assessment	✓	✓	X	✓		
Record Review	✓	✓	X	✓		
Mitigation Report	X	X	X	✓		
Case Conference	✓	✓	✓	✓		

Regardless of evaluation type, vendor(s) will provide comprehensive written reports to designated contact(s) from each of the Center's programs. Depending on the posture of the case, these reports will be shared with the defense attorney and/or district attorney's office to work towards a pre-plea disposition and/or alternative to incarceration plea. For Brooklyn Mental Health Court, Brooklyn Felony ATI and Manhattan Justice Opportunities, these reports, along with the Center's social workers' assessments, will also be shared with the Court and will be used to prepare service recommendations, as well as applications for housing, treatment and case management services.

Reports are to be written in a neutral, independent and non-judgmental tone. Ensuring timely completion of evaluations to reduce case processing and disposition time is imperative for successful vendors. Brief clinical assessments for the jail population review program and forensic psychiatric assessments for BMHC, Brooklyn Felony Alternatives to Incarceration and Manhattan Justice Opportunities should be provided to the relevant team within 1-3 weeks following the completion of the evaluation. For cases that are clinically or diagnostically complicated and require additional time, the selected vendor(s) and Center staff from the appropriate program will work together to identify a reasonable timeframe for the written report to be completed. In some situations, Center staff may read and approve written reports on any given case to ensure they comply with programmatic standards and are consistent across programming.

Evaluations will be conducted for individuals who are in the community and incarcerated at Rikers Island. For incarcerated individuals, most evaluations will be conducted using the Department of Correction's (DOC) Teams Video Teleconferencing Platform. The vendor(s) will arrange and coordinate all evaluations directly with DOC, using their online scheduling system. If challenges arise, the appropriate Center staff will coordinate with DOC and the vendor to address the issue. Some types of forensic assessments require in-person contact to complete the assessment and applicants should describe a plan for conducting these assessments. For individuals in the community, evaluations will be conducted in-person or virtually, in a space or platform provided by the vendor, and applicants should describe a plan for conducting these assessments. Vendors can be reimbursed when participants refuse to be assessed, and applicants should include a reimbursement protocol and rate in their proposal.

Project Timeline

The project is to start upon the signing of the contract and the vendor must be ready to begin providing all services in the summer/early fall of 2025 for a three-year period.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants must be licensed by the state of New York, individual or group psychologists/psychiatrists, or qualified nonprofit organizations with a demonstrated expertise in forensic psychiatry and psychology. Applicants must have experience working with criminal courts and court-mandated clients.

Proposal Content

This will be a three-year (3) contract, with the possibility of renewal contingent upon funding. The Center anticipates making multiple awards. Proposals must be no more than seven (7) pages double spaced, Calibri Body 12-point font in PDF form and must include:

- Proposed scope of work and implementation plan
- Budget and pricing. Pricing must detail all services to be provided including proposed price scale for different types of forensic evaluations
- Relevant experience (in industry, geography, specific work)
- Vendor's organizational and staffing structure
- Letters of reference

Submission Instructions

Proposals are due on Friday June 20, 2025 at 5pm EST. Late proposals will not be reviewed.

- a. Proposals must be submitted as a PDF.
- b. Proposals must include a specific dollar amount for each service to be provided.
- c. Proposals should be emailed to contracts@innovatingjustice.org.

We anticipate selecting a vendor around July 2025. The final terms, scope of work, funding, and conditions will be set in a contract between the selected vendor and the Center.

Please direct any questions regarding this RFP to Jeremy Madrid at contracts@innovatingjustice.org using "Forensic Evaluations RFP" in the subject line.

Selection Criteria

When reviewing proposals, the Center staff will evaluate the following factors:

- *Suitability of proposal* – Proposed services meet the needs and criteria set forth in the RFP.
- *Expertise and capacity* – Information on the vendor/vendor's staff to demonstrate the clinical expertise, organizational structure, and assessment capacity necessary to complete this project.
- *Experience* – Vendor has successfully completed similar projects and has the requisite qualifications necessary to successfully undertake this work.
- *Pricing* – Proposed cost of the project.
- *Presentation* – Proposal information is presented clearly, logically and is well-organized.
- *References* – Letters of reference from two current or former clients.

General Conditions

1. Right to Amend RFP: The Center reserves the right to cancel or amend or supplement the RFP, giving equal information and cooperation by way of issued addendum to all proponents through email.

2. Bidder Incurred Costs: All costs incurred in the preparation and presentation of proposals in any way whatsoever shall be wholly absorbed by the bidder(s).

3. Acceptance of Proposals: The Center is not bound to accept the lowest price or any proposal of those submitted. Proposals will be assessed in light of the evaluation criteria specified in this RFP.

4. Evaluation of Proposals: Several members of the Center and potentially external stakeholders will evaluate all complete proposals. The Center reserves the right to make an award based directly on the proposals submitted or to negotiate further with one or more proponents.

5 Contract: The final terms, scope of work, funding, and conditions will be set in a contract between the selected vendor and the Center.

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