

CENTER
FOR
COURT
INNOVATION

ANNUAL REPORT

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2011

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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: by creating demonstration projects that test new approaches to justice, by offering training and expert assistance to justice reformers around the world, and by conducting research to separate the strategies that work from those that don't.

In 2011, the Center celebrated its 15th anniversary with the help of hundreds of guests, including New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and New York State Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman at the Chelsea Art Museum. At the anniversary celebration, the Center also honored its founding director John Feinblatt.

“By giving judges more options, more carrots, and more sticks, the Center for Court Innovation gives defendants a better chance to turn their lives around and stay out of trouble,” Mayor Bloomberg said at the 15th anniversary event. “Reducing recidivism is one of the toughest things to do in criminal justice, but it is probably the most important and has the greatest impact on crime rates. Everybody wins when it happens, our streets are safer, taxpayers spend less money on jail, and people put their talents to more productive uses. And I think it's fair to say that no one has been as effective at finding new ways to reduce recidivism as the Center for Court Innovation.”

What follows is a report on the Center's activities in 2011 and a quick sketch of its plans for the year ahead.

DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

The Center has helped to develop and implement more than 20 demonstration projects that test new approaches to the delivery of justice.

The Center's roots stretch back to the early 1990s and the creation of the pioneering **Midtown Community Court**, which sought to improve safety and the quality of life in Times Square and surrounding residential com-

munities. Since then, the Center has developed pilot projects that address drug addiction, mental illness, domestic violence, juvenile crime, neighborhood conflict, and gun violence. Highlights from 2011 include the following:

Enhancing Sentencing Options in Newark

Newark Community Solutions applies a problem-solving approach to non-violent cases in the Newark Municipal Court.

At a ceremony in June to mark the project's official opening, Mayor Cory A. Booker said that Newark Community Solutions was part of the city's efforts to forge a justice system that worked toward "ending cycles of recidivism by creating positive change and empowering lives."

By combining punishment with help, Newark Community Solutions seeks to reduce the Municipal Court's reliance on ineffective fines and expensive short-term jail sentences.

In pursuit of its two principal goals—changing sentencing practice and improving public perceptions of justice—Newark Community Solutions is expected to coordinate and monitor alternative sanctions for 3,500 defendants in its first year.

Municipal Court Judge Victoria Pratt said that one of the keys to the project is that it treats defendants with respect. "What is it about this program that someone with over 50 arrests can come into the court and say, 'Judge, this is the first time I've entered a court through the front door'? It's because the defendants feel they're being treated with respect and dignity."

Improving Safety in Brownsville

The new **Brownsville Community Justice Center**, which is being developed in coordination with the New York court system, the Brooklyn D.A.'s Office, the New York City Department of Probation, and other government and community partners, will address crime by providing the services and support that local residents need to become productive members of society.

In 2011, the Center released the results of a community survey that it conducted as part of the needs assessment process in Brownsville. The survey found overwhelming concern with guns, gangs, and drugs in the neighborhood as well as low levels of confidence in the justice system.

Although the Brownsville Community Justice Center is still in development, it has already begun to address neighborhood concerns through projects like the **Brownsville Youth Court**, which trains teenagers to serve as jurors, attorneys, and judges in cases involving their peers. The Brownsville Youth Court, which launched in May, has already held 110 hearings and has a 93 percent sanction compliance rate.

The Center's **Youth Justice Board** also focused on Brownsville in 2011. The after-school program, which brings together high school students to study and propose solutions to the public safety challenges that most affect them, examined crime problems in Brownsville through interviews with justice system stakeholders, community leaders, and young people. The result was a report, *Looking Forward: Youth Perspectives on Reducing Crime in*

Brownsville and Beyond, that was released at a forum at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in Manhattan. Brooklyn D.A. Charles Hynes was the keynote speaker.

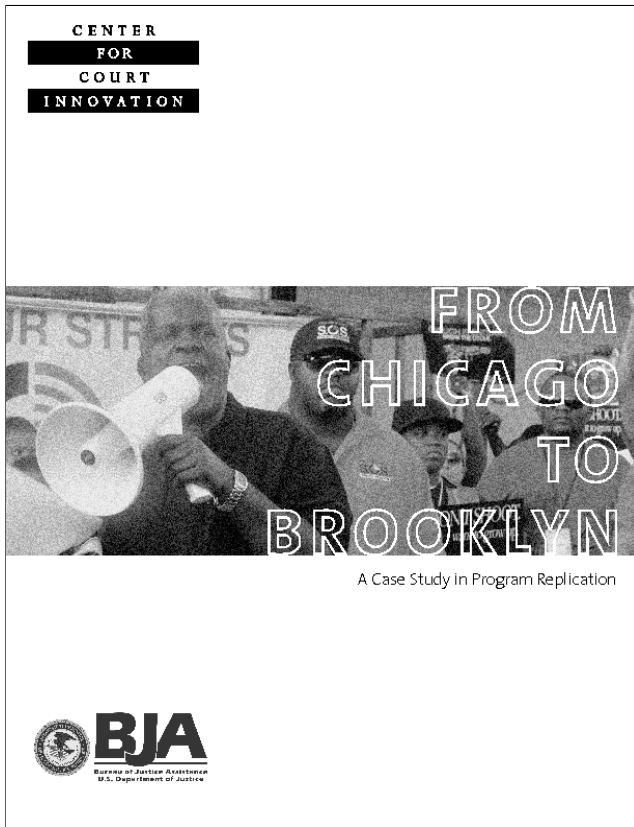
Also in Brownsville, several community service crews of low-level offenders working with **NYC Community Cleanup** helped repair conditions of disorder. The crews, mandated by a judge to provide community restitution, contributed more than 5,000 hours to improve the neighborhood by cleaning local parks, shoveling snow, and painting over graffiti, among other activities.

The Center also co-sponsored Safe Surrender in Brownsville in partnership with the court system, the District Attorney's Office, the Police Department, the Legal Aid Society, and local churches. Over the course of two days, local residents had 526 summons warrants vacated and received links to the services provided by more than 20 agencies.



Photo: Sarah Schweig, Center for Court Innovation

Newark Mayor Cory A. Booker speaks at the opening of Newark Community Solutions in June.



From Chicago to Brooklyn charts how Save Our Streets adapted a Chicago anti-gun-violence program to the Crown Heights neighborhood of Brooklyn.

Addressing Gun Violence

In May, the **Crown Heights Community Mediation Center** created a new youth program component for **Save Our Streets**.

Save Our Streets combats gun violence by providing immediate intervention whenever a shooting occurs. Outreach workers known as “violence interrupters” walk the streets of Crown Heights, sometimes in the middle of the night, 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.

The new youth component engages teens in combating gun violence by participating in peace marches, meeting legislators, and organizing an anti-violence flash mob. Participants also receive college readiness training and assistance in obtaining summer jobs or internships.

In 2011, Save Our Streets drew press coverage from cable channel NY1, WNYC radio, and the *New York Times*, among others. Since the program started in 2010, the target neighborhood has seen a 43 percent decrease in gun violence.

Improving Responses to Youth Crime

Bronx Youth Futures, which the Center launched in 2011, serves as an alternative response to youth crime by offering intensive mental health services to the newly arrested, those on probation, and those facing revocation of probation. The program, which is expected to serve about 30 young people each year, is a replication of **QUEST Futures**, a project run by the Center in Queens.

With the support of Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr., the **Harlem Youth Court** expanded to include referrals from Criminal Court, hearing the cases of young people between the ages of 16 and 18. The Center also began planning for a new youth court in Queens to be launched in 2012.

With support from former New York Chief Judge Judith S. Kaye and the law firm Skadden Arps, the **New York City High School Youth Court Project** is working with seven city high school to help them implement in-school youth courts as alternatives to suspension and other serious disciplinary consequences. By the end of

2011, Brooklyn High School for Law and Technology had held its first hearings and the Pablo Neruda Academy had completed its student training and begun mock hearings in preparation for taking real cases.

The Center's **New York Juvenile Justice Corps** is an AmeriCorps program with 58 members. The Corps assigns members to assist at a variety of innovative juvenile justice projects, including those run by the Center as well as government partners like the New York State Office of Children and Family Services.

Helping Victims of Sexual Abuse

It is estimated that over 80 percent of women arrested for prostitution in Manhattan have suffered some form of past or present victimization, including childhood sexual abuse, sexual and/or physical assault, or domestic violence.

In 2011, the Center used its demonstration projects to assess more than 240 individuals arrested on prostitution-related offenses and link them to specialized services.

The Midtown Community Court and **Bronx Community Solutions** connect those with histories of physical and sexual violence to community-based service providers who offer resources and tools to help them change their lives.

Rather than jail, the Center has sought to develop new alternatives for these cases, working with partners like Sanctuary for Families and STEPS to End Family Violence.

Reintegrating Ex-Offenders into the Community

In keeping with an organization-wide effort to incorporate evidence-based interventions where possible, the **Harlem Parole Reentry Court** launched a 22-session cognitive behavioral therapy group for parolees called Thinking for a Change, which tries to change behavior at its cognitive roots by teaching participants new social skills and helping them restructure their thinking.

The Reentry Court, which worked with 103 clients in 2011, links parolees to a wide range of neighborhood-based social services, including drug treatment, transitional employment, and vocational services. To promote increased accountability, participants are required to return to the reentry court frequently. With the support of the J.C. Flowers Foundation, the Harlem Reentry Court will soon expand to include a component that attempts to engage the family members of parolees in facilitating successful reentry.

RESEARCH

The Center uses a variety of research methodologies to evaluate both its own experiments and innovative criminal justice programs around the world.

Drug Courts

In 2011, the Center for Court Innovation completed one of the most ambitious studies of drug courts to date. The five-year multi-site study—which was funded by the National Institute of Justice and conducted in collaboration



Photos: Gene Sorkin, Center for Court Innovation

In partnership with the court system, the Brooklyn District Attorney’s Office, the New York City Police Department, the Legal Aid Society and local churches, the Center sponsored Safe Surrender in Brownsville, Brooklyn, which allowed local residents to vacate over 500 summons warrants.

with researchers at the Urban Institute and RTI International—compared participants in 23 drug courts in seven states to similar defendants who went through conventional case processing.

The **Multi-Site Adult Drug Court Evaluation** documented that drug court participants were one-third less likely to report using drugs 18 months after their enrollment in the program. And they were responsible for less than half as many criminal acts as the comparison group after 18 months. Largely because of these reductions in criminal behavior, drug courts ended up saving an estimated \$5,680 per participant.

In examining why drug courts have succeeded, the evaluation focused in particular on the role of the judge and the value of procedural fairness. The fact that drug court participants generally had more favorable perceptions of the judge than the comparison group was among the most important factors explaining why drug courts reduced drug use and crime.

Of the study, the U.S. Government Accountability Office wrote: “This is the broadest and most ambitious study of drug courts to date; it is well done analytically; and the results, as they relate to the impact of drug courts, are transparent and well described.”

Publications

Articles and monographs by Center for Court Innovation authors that appeared in 2011 include:

REENTRY

- Recidivism Among Parolees in New York City, 2001-2008
- Adapting to Bad News: Lessons from the Harlem Parole Reentry Court
- Reentry Courts: Looking Ahead: A Conversation about Strategies for Offender Reintegration

TRIBAL

- State and Tribal Court: Strategies for Bridging the Divide

TRIAL & ERROR

- Innovation in Criminal Justice: A Graduate School Curriculum
- From Chicago to Brooklyn: A Case Study in Program Replication
- Small Experiments, Big Change: HOPE Probation and the Use of Demonstration Projects to Advance Criminal Justice Reform
- Learning by Doing: What Demonstration Projects Can Teach Us About Innovation
- Why Good Programs Go Bad

JUVENILE JUSTICE

- East Harlem Juvenile Gang Task Force: 2011 Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan
- Looking Forward: Youth Perspectives on Reducing Crime in Brownsville and Beyond
- New Approach to Helping Troubled Youth

FAMILY JUSTICE

- The U.S. Attorney General's Defending Childhood Initiative: Formative Evaluation of the Phase I Demonstration Program
- It's Your Life: A permanency achievement kit to help youth and their families navigate Family Court permanency planning proceedings

EVALUATION

- Choosing Performance Indicators for Your Community Prosecution Initiative
- Tips for Conducting Randomized Trials in a Criminal Court Settings
- Process Evaluation 101: An Overview for Justice Practitioners

PROCEDURAL JUSTICE

- Procedural Fairness in California: Initiatives, Challenges, and Recommendations
- Judges Matter: How Courts Reduce Crime and Save Money

COMMUNITY JUSTICE

- What is a Community Court? How the Model is Being Adapted Across the United States
- Community Court: The Research Literature
- Community Perceptions of Brownsville: A Survey of Neighborhood Quality of Life, Safety, and Services

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- Case Coordinators in Domestic Violence Courts: Five Key Roles
- Integrated Domestic Violence Courts: Key Principles
- Criminal Domestic Violence Courts: Key Principles
- Civil Domestic Violence Courts: Key Principles



Members of the Center's youth courts at a Law Day celebration at New York Law School in April.

DRUG COURTS

- The Bronx Family Treatment Court, 2005-2010: Impact on Family Court Outcomes and Participant Experiences and Perceptions
- The Multi-Site Adult Drug Court Evaluation
- Evidence-Based Screening Among Drug-Involved Defendants: Piloting the GAIN Short Screener in the Brooklyn Treatment Court

MISCELLANEOUS

- Statewide Coordination of Problem-Solving Courts: A Snapshot of Five States
- From the Ground Up: Promising Criminal Justice Projects in the U.S. and the U.K.
- Combining Research and Practice: The Center for Court Innovation's Approach to Justice Reform

EXPERT ASSISTANCE

The Center offers hands-on expert assistance to criminal justice reformers around the world. In 2011, it hosted over 500 visitors to its demonstration projects. Subject matter experts from the Center traveled to projects across the globe, assisting in planning, implementation, trouble-shooting, and evaluation. For example, in the area of community justice, the Center assisted in the launch of community courts in smaller jurisdictions such as Harlingen, Texas, and Milliken, Colorado; facilitated a day-long statewide criminal justice summit in Montpelier, Vermont; and conducted a series of workshops for court planners and stakeholders in Adelaide, Australia. With the support of the U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Center produced *Testing New Ideas: Evidence, Innovation, and Community Courts*, a video about community courts, featuring footage from community courts in Texas, New Jersey, and New York.

Through its **Tribal Justice Exchange**, the Center assisted the Navajo Nation in a two year planning effort to create the Aneth Community Court, which opened in 2011. It is the first community court in Indian country. The Menominee Tribe of Wisconsin began implementation of a specialized domestic violence court after an 18-month planning effort in partnership with the Center. The Menominee court is one of the first domestic violence courts in Indian country.

In December, the Tribal Justice Exchange, in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance, sponsored a day-long discussion among tribal and state court practitioners and policymakers on Indian peacemaking, with an eye toward documenting promising practices and introducing peacemaking in non-Indian settings.

Going forward, Center researchers are gearing up for two new studies of tribal projects: a multi-method process and impact evaluation in two tribal and four non-tribal sites of community-based strategies to reduce children's exposure to violence, as part of the Attorney General's Defending Childhood Initiative, and a multi-site, nationwide study of gang involvement among tribal youth under way in 2012.

In 2011, the Center supported drug treatment courts across the U.S. by helping jurisdictions with strategic planning and providing on-site training. Among the states where the Center worked in 2011 were California, Colorado, Maine, Michigan, Montana, New Mexico, and West Virginia. For example, in West Virginia, the Center provided a specialized training on “Constitutional and other Legal Issues in Adult Drug Courts” to practitioners from across the state.

The Center is developing a national on-line learning system for drug courts. As part of that project, the Center has created virtual site visit tours of drug courts in Georgia and Montana. The Center has also created a national advisory board to assist in the development of a legal resource guide to constitutional issues in drug court.

In 2011, the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office on Violence Against Women’s Court Training and Improvements Program selected the Center as its comprehensive technical assistance provider. In that capacity, the Center provided support to dozens of jurisdictions across the country, helping them to enhance their response to domestic violence and sexual assault. The Center’s domestic violence team worked with sites in Ohio, Minnesota, Virginia, Georgia, Illinois, Idaho, Washington, Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana, Michigan, Guam, and the Northern California Tribal Court Coalition.

The Center conducted three national webinars and hosted two national open houses designed for domestic violence court planning teams from across the U.S. to learn firsthand about best practices from court observations and panel discussions.

The Center reaches out to practitioners, policymakers, and the public at large through its web site, which attracts an average of over 35,000 visitors a month. The Center’s web site, www.courtinnovation.org, was revamped in 2011. The new site makes it easy to follow news of the Center, locate publications and resources, read blogs, watch videos, and listen to podcasts featuring interviews with justice system leaders.

LOOKING AHEAD

The Center is committed to continuing to test new ideas in an effort to improve the delivery of justice. New work in development includes:

Adolescent Diversion Program

In an ambitious initiative led by New York State Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman, the New York court system is attempting to change the way it handles crimes committed by 16 and 17 year olds.

New York is one of only two states that still treat 16 and 17 year olds charged with non-violent offenses as adults. The Adolescent Diversion Program seeks to move the state closer to the rest of the country by offering young people alternatives to jail and permanent criminal records.

Under the initiative, specially trained Criminal Court judges will hear cases involving 16 and 17 year olds and attempt to replicate some of the advantages of Family Court. They will have expanded dispositional options, gen-

erally consisting of community restitution and short-term social service interventions, including sessions devoted to conflict resolution, civic responsibility, and vocational and educational goal setting.

The program's ultimate intention is to help teenage defendants avoid the legal and collateral consequences associated with criminal prosecution and receive the assistance they need to pursue law-abiding, productive futures.

The Center is helping the court system to develop and implement this initiative, which will be rolled out in nine jurisdictions in early 2012.

Courtroom Communication

The **Improving Courtroom Communication Project**, part of a collaboration with the U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance and the National Judicial College, aims to test the impact of enhanced courtroom communication practices on defendants' perceptions of fairness. The project is founded on the concept of procedural justice: the idea that when defendants and litigants perceive the court process to be fair, they are more likely to comply with court orders and follow the law in the future.

In 2011, Center staff convened a multi-disciplinary working group to explore procedural justice principles in the context of a busy criminal courtroom. Working group members included Tom R. Tyler of Yale Law School, Malcolm Feeley of UC-Berkeley, Judge Kevin Burke of the American Judges Association, and communications and linguistics experts from around the country.

In 2012, the Center will launch the demonstration component of the Improving Courtroom Communication Project in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The demonstration project will use defendant interviews, structured courtroom observations, and compliance data—collected before and after the training—to evaluate the impact of enhanced communication practices on defendant perceptions of fairness, as well as defendants' compliance with court orders.

Community Justice Conference

Hundreds of participants from around the world will gather in Washington D.C. for **Community Justice 2012: the International Conference of Community Courts**. The Center, in partnership with the U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance, is hosting the conference for practitioners from both inside and outside the justice system, including judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, court administrators, clinical staff, and others, to learn about the latest developments in community court-related initiatives and important cutting edge reforms. Featured speakers will include Assistant Attorney General Laurie O. Robinson and Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy R. Gil Kerlikowske.

Centre for Justice Innovation

In 2011, the Center formally launched an office in the United Kingdom with a public event at London City Hall featuring Member of Parliament Nick Herbert, the minister of state for police and criminal justice. Priorities for

the Center's London office in 2012 include launching the Probation Innovation Network, a project designed to strengthen and spread innovative practice within the probation service in England and Wales, helping the Scottish government implement a Criminal Justice Change and Innovation Fund, and providing practical technical assistance to the North Liverpool Community Justice Centre, a project inspired by the Red Hook Community Justice Center.

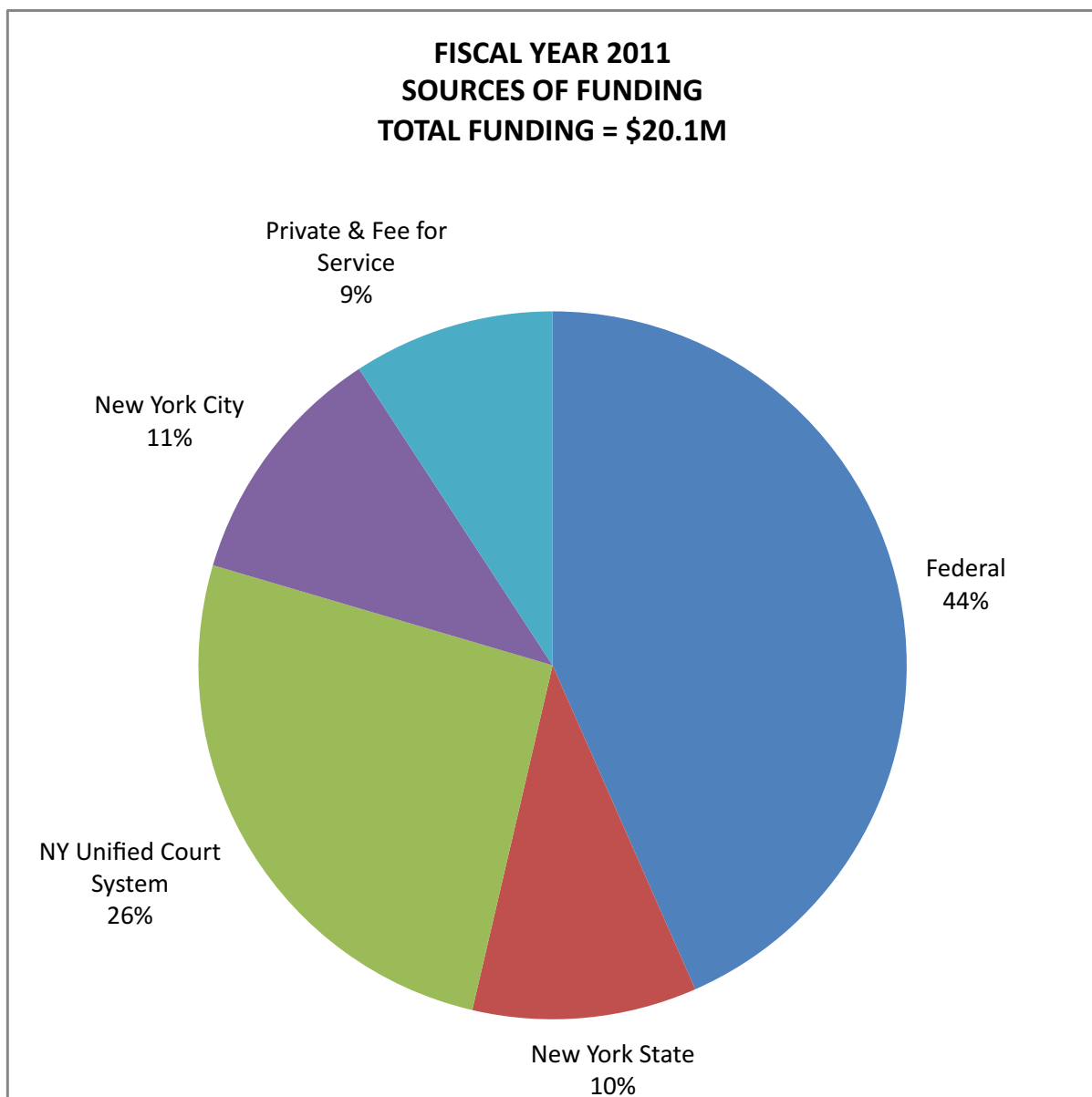


Photo: Gene Sorkin, Center for Court Innovation

New York State Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman welcomes Mayor Michael Bloomberg to the podium at the Center for Court Innovation's 15th anniversary celebration.

FINANCES

The Center for Court Innovation is supported by a mix of private, public, and fee-for-service funding. It closed the year with an operating budget of \$20.1 million.



**FISCAL YEAR 2011
STATEMENT OF EXPENDITURES**

Operations

Attendance Court	108,000
Bronx Child Witness Support Program	92,000
Bronx Community Solutions	1,064,000
Bronx Futures	152,000
Brooklyn Mental Health Court	481,000
Brownsville Community Justice Center	275,000
Crown Heights Community Mediation Center	852,000
Greenpoint Youth Court	137,000
Harlem Community Justice Center	1,318,000
Midtown Community Court	1,584,000
NYC Community Cleanup	1,001,000
QUEST/QUEST Futures	1,166,000
Red Hook Community Justice Center	1,634,000
NYC Juvenile Justice Corps	646,000
Staten Island Youth Justice Center	747,000
Westchester Court Education Initiative	107,000

Subtotal **12,063,000**

Research, Technical Assistance & Training

Domestic Violence	2,193,000
Drug Court	1,603,000
Community Justice	1,317,000
United Kingdom Centre for Justice Innovation	209,000
Trial and Error Project	244,000
Tribal Justice Exchange	509,000
Youth Justice Programs	519,000

Subtotal **6,594,000**

Administration, Planning, & Oversight

Project Safe Neighborhoods	401,000
Center Core	1,080,000

Subtotal **1,481,000**

TOTAL EXPENDITURES **20,138,000**

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