

Quick Stats – Expanded Program

| Agency | Start Date | Number Served Annually | Annual Budget |
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| Department of Probation | January 2012 | 242 | \$1,000,000* |

*Does not include \$800,000 CEO innovation funds

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| Problem Statement | <p>Court involvedⁱ young adults face a multitude of challenges returning to their communities, frequently confronting the same issues that led them to an arrest. In the absence of intervention, these young people are likely to recidivate, particularly if they return to neighborhoods entrenched in poverty, crime, and record levels of unemployment. Many of these young adults have poor literacy skills and require job-readiness training for employability. Evidence indicates that post-release education or employment has a significant impact on reducing recidivism.</p> <p>Yet, in New York City and other jurisdictions across the country, too few programs focus adequately on the young adult age group who, without assistance, find barriers to education and legitimate work insurmountable, particularly in the current labor market. Employers who are otherwise hesitant to hire individuals previously involved in the criminal justice system, are more willing to consider it where there is evidence that someone is highly motivated and reliable, qualities best “demonstrated by high attendance [in youth development programs] and short stays in transitional work.”ⁱⁱ</p> |
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| Research and Evidence | <p>Justice Community evolved out of several Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) programs that serve court involved youth. The NYC Justice Corps is a program that prepares young adults who have been involved in the criminal justice system to succeed in the labor market while giving back to their communities. The program is currently undergoing a random assignment evaluation with results expected in 2012. The model appears promising with participants having a 70% engagement rate for the entire six months of the program.ⁱⁱⁱ</p> <p>Another promising CEO program is Employment Works, which helps probationers secure employment. Since the launch of the program in August 2008, more than 1,200 people on probation have gained meaningful employment at an average salary of more than \$10 per hour.^{iv} Over one-third of the participants were young adults.^v</p> <p>A Mathematica Policy Research study of six major transitional job programs across the country, including the Transitional Work Corporation program in Philadelphia and the Community Jobs Program in San Francisco found that between 81% and 94% of participants who successfully completed one of these programs were placed in unsubsidized employment after their transitional jobs ended.^{vi} However, program retention was a problem and on average, only half of participants completed the program.</p> |
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| Program Description | <p>Justice Community engages participants in community benefit projects, education, subsidized work and civic engagement, as well as youth leadership, peer mentorship, life skills and case management. The program also promotes an understanding of participants’ legal rights as a means of reducing barriers to future gainful employment. The program model adapts to the current status of each participant, whether in need of education or</p> |
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| Implementation Timeline | <p>employment services, and uses the participant’s community as an integral component of the intervention. The program will maintain an open enrollment policy, making the terms and length of participation flexible enough to allow participants to enter, leave and/or return to the program as needed.</p> <p>Justice Community offers a range of employment and career related opportunities and services, including, but not limited to: career exploration services, career awareness, job readiness training, internships and apprenticeships, job fairs, school and college visits, unsubsidized jobs, community benefit projects, job search/placement assistance, job placement, retention services (and replacement as needed), and financial literacy. Justice Community also offers financial incentives that will help motivate participants’ engagement, including stipends to support subsidized jobs, promote sustained participation, and recognize achievement milestones.</p> <p>The community benefit component of the program helps establish a positive local peer group and team experience so that participants develop meaningful alternatives to negative social networks and acquire collaborative, goal oriented skills. Community engagement and community benefit projects – based on restorative justice principles – help participants become better integrated into their communities and develop a sense of ownership, commitment and pride that will encourage sustained community engagement.</p> <p>Justice Community also offers experiential and service learning opportunities, basic education and GED classes, and encourages postsecondary academic education, technical education and/or occupational training leading to nationally recognized credentials. Each participant will be assessed to determine his/her individual needs, interests and appropriate educational setting.</p> |
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| Target Population | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs launched in January, 2012 |
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| Expected Outcomes | <p>The program targets court involved young adults who are aged 16-24 at the time of enrollment. Forty percent of participants will be probationers. The program targets the following communities: the South Bronx, Harlem, East New York, Brownsville, and South Jamaica.</p> |
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| Expected Outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of the participants engage in community projects. • At least 50% of participants receiving educational services demonstrate improvements in literacy and numeracy skill levels based on nationally recognized assessment tools. • At least 50% of all participants are placed into unsubsidized employment or continue their academic or vocational activities. • Less than 15% of those who complete the program will be reconvicted on any type of offense within one year of program intake. |
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ⁱ Court involved refers to individuals who may have been arrested but not necessarily convicted of a crime.

ⁱⁱ Public Private Ventures. (2000). *Getting Back to Work: Employment Programs for Ex-Offenders*. Philadelphia, PA: Buck, Maria

ⁱⁱⁱ NYC Center for Economic Opportunity, Westat/ Metis Associates. (2009). *Evaluation of NYC Justice Corp: Final Report of Year one of Justice Corps Program Implementation*.

^{iv} Department of Probation. (2010). *Commissioner Schiraldi and Team Testify before the City Council*.

^v NYC Center for Economic Opportunity. *Performance Monitoring Data*.

^{vi} Ibid.