



PRESS RELEASE

**New York State
Unified Court System**

**Hon. Tamiko Amaker
Acting Chief Administrative Judge**

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Midtown Community Court to Further Expand Operations Aimed at Young Adult Offenders

MANHATTAN—Acting Chief Administrative Judge Tamiko Amaker today announced that all Desk Appearance Tickets (DATs) issued to emerging adults (ages 18 to 25) throughout the borough of Manhattan will be returned to the Midtown Community Court. Issued by the NYPD for lower-level offenses, DATs require the recipient to appear in court for an arraignment at a future date. To accommodate the new borough-wide arraignment calendar, the Midtown Community Court will now be open on Thursdays, with Hon. John Zhuo Wang presiding. The court had been operating only on Fridays over the past year.

As one of the nation's first community courts, the Midtown Community Court has been addressing quality-of-life issues since 1993. The court, located at 314 West 54 Street, is a project of the Center for Justice Innovation (formerly the Center for Court Innovation). Community courts respond creatively to low-level offending, addressing problems that often underlie criminal behavior to reduce recidivism. Focusing on local concerns, these courts rely on the collaboration of criminal justice agencies, area residents, civic organizations, government entities, social service providers and other stakeholders.

The midtown court has long served emerging adults through its specialized youth part, last year expanding its emerging adult programs and services to include young adults ages 18 to 25, up from ages 18 to 23. The court provides tailored services to meet the developmental stages and needs of this age group, including individualized and group counseling, harm reduction services, healthy relationships and coping skills groups, parenting classes, education and employment support, and links to social services and housing resources.

The midtown court's sister site, Manhattan Justice Opportunities (MJO), which is located downtown and has been referring emerging adults to the midtown court for services, will continue to do so. The midtown court will also accept emerging adult referrals from downtown arraignments for ongoing court appearances.

"I am extremely pleased that the Midtown Community Court is further expanding its capacity to better serve the community. The mid-Manhattan court has a proven record of improving public safety and the quality of life within the community, providing diversion programs and critical services to low-level offenders to help break the cycle of crime and put them on a path to productive, law-abiding lives. I am thankful to Judge Wang for his steadfast dedication and to the Court's numerous partners and stakeholders for their ongoing commitment to, and support of, its important mission," said Judge Amaker.

"The individualized support and services the Midtown Community Court provides young people charged with low-level offenses benefits everyone—the participants, their families and their communities. With all emerging adult cases in Manhattan coming to the Midtown Community Court, more young people will be able to access counseling, education and other vital services to help them achieve success and avoid the negative collateral consequences of justice system involvement. We are grateful to the court system and all our partners for their support of the Midtown Community Court, which seeks new and effective ways to strengthen public safety, improve public confidence in justice and reduce the use of unnecessary incarceration," said Courtney Bryan, executive director of the Center for Justice Innovation.

"Midtown Community Court is an essential part of our work to improve public safety. By connecting young people to social services, including mental health and substance use treatment, education, and vocational training, they are put on the path to lead healthy and successful lives. The launch of the Emerging Adult Part in Midtown will deepen this work and expand capacity, and I am appreciative to all of those who have played a role in coordinating this initiative, including OCA, Judge Wang, the defense bar, our local elected officials, the Center for Justice Innovation and the Midtown community," said Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg.

"Midtown Community Court has long served as an asset for the New Yorkers we represent," said Tina Luongo, chief attorney of the Criminal Defense Practice at The Legal Aid Society. "This court connects people to diversion programming and other critical services, and it must serve as a model for all courts throughout New York City, especially 100 Centre Street."

“Without a fully functional Midtown Community Court, we’re fighting quality of life crimes and recidivism with one hand tied behind our back. I’m elated that our efforts paid off and MCC will soon open their doors an additional day—especially since MCC’s data-proven methods help reduce recidivism and improve quality of life. I thank Acting Chief Administrative Judge Amaker, District Attorney Bragg, the Center for Justice Innovation, and the Legal Aid Society, along with my colleagues Congressman Nadler, Borough President Levine, Assembly Members Rosenthal and Simone, Council Members Brewer and Bottcher, for collaborating on this important issue,” said NYS Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal.

The Center for Justice Innovation is a non-profit organization that works with communities and justice systems to advance equity, increase safety and help individuals and communities thrive. The Center's goal is to identify and resolve as early as possible the challenges that bring people into the criminal and civil legal systems. Since its founding in 1996, the Center has grown from a small group of planners to an organization with a \$100 million annual budget and over 800 employees who staff **dozens of initiatives** in New York, New Jersey and California, advise practitioners and policymakers across the country and around the world, and conduct research and share their expertise with those seeking to transform the justice system around the world.

To learn more about New York’s community courts and other problem-solving courts, visit: https://ww2.nycourts.gov/COURTS/problem_solving/index.shtml.

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