



PRESS RELEASE

**New York State
Unified Court System**

**Hon. Lawrence K. Marks
Chief Administrative Judge**

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State's First Young Adult Court Launched in Brooklyn

NEW YORK — Chief Administrative Judge Lawrence K. Marks today joined Brooklyn District Attorney Ken Thompson and local court officials to inaugurate Brooklyn's Young Adult Court, the first court part in New York State to handle exclusively misdemeanor defendants ages 16 through 24, offering counseling, treatment and services customized to the unique needs of young adults in an effort to reduce the use of jail, decrease recidivism and enhance public safety. DWI cases, sex crimes and domestic violence are ineligible for adjudication in the new court part.

The Brooklyn District Attorney's newly established Young Adult Bureau, with its comprehensive approach to the prosecution of low-level offenses of adolescents and young adults, will serve to complement the efforts of the new court initiative.

The new program is supported by a grant awarded to the Center for Court Innovation and the Brooklyn District Attorney's Office by the U.S. Department of Justice. The grant acknowledged that young adults account for a disproportionate percentage of criminal arrests nationwide, have the highest propensity for recidivism of any other group and face more severe consequences from convictions and incarceration, such as problems securing employment, housing and education.

“This is one more example of the criminal justice system working together to implement an innovative approach to low-level criminal activity. By focusing on young adults charged with low-level offenses, this new court part seeks to identify the underlying problem that led these cases to come into court, and develop an age-appropriate solution to address that underlying problem. Research has shown that young people are more amenable to rehabilitation. Ensuring that these individuals are referred to appropriate services and programs will lower recidivism and help them go on to become productive, law-abiding adults. I applaud District Attorney Ken Thompson for his leadership in establishing a special bureau within his office that complements the new young adult court part and commend the U.S. Department of Justice, the Center for Court Innovation, the local defense bar and our other justice partners for their support of this program,” said Chief Administrative Judge Marks.

“Young adults account for a disproportionately large percentage of criminal arrests and have the highest risk of re-offending. Recognizing that, we have created the specialized Brooklyn Young Adult Bureau to offer this population the services they need to help set them on the right path. I would like to thank the U.S. Department of Justice for providing funding, and the Center for Court Innovation, the Office of Court Administration and our other partners for their commitment to making this initiative a reality. Together, I am confident that this new court will be a success and serve as a model for others around the country,” said District Attorney Ken Thompson.

Participants in the Young Adult Court will undergo a risk-needs assessment and be matched to age-appropriate treatment and services, including substance abuse, mental health, anger management, GED, vocational and internship programs. Social workers from Brooklyn Justice Initiatives, a project of the Center for Court Innovation, will conduct the assessments, develop treatment recommendations and coordinate services. Participants will be rigorously monitored for compliance with court-mandated treatment and programs. Upon successful fulfillment of the program, participants may have their charges reduced or dismissed.

Hon. Craig S. Walker will preside over the new Young Adult Court part.

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