



DEVELOPING AN EVALUATION PLAN FOR COMMUNITY COURTS ASSESSING THE HARTFORD COMMUNITY COURT MODEL

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I. Introduction

When the Midtown Community Court began operation in Manhattan in 1993, it posed a fundamental challenge to traditional assumptions about the role of American courts in dispensing justice and, in particular, about how they should relate to the “community.” The Midtown experiment was a catalyst for innovation and encouraged the diffusion of the community court model to other jurisdictions with different settings and challenges. In fact, for the Midtown innovators, an important question posed by the community court experiment was whether its goals and methods could be adapted in places quite unlike New York City.¹

As other jurisdictions sought to adapt the principles, methods, and goals of the Midtown experiment, it became evident that the next generation of community courts would not necessarily resemble the Manhattan prototype and that important variations of the original model would emerge. Although a next generation of community court innovation continued in New York locations as well (e.g., Red Hook, Harlem, and Crown Heights), the model was adapted to a variety of settings across the United States. These included Portland, Oregon; Austin, Texas; both West Palm Beach and Miami, Florida; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Philadelphia,

Pennsylvania; and, most notably, Hartford, Connecticut.

The Hartford Community Court opened in 1998 and, as one of the first post-Midtown community courts, represents a test of the transferability of the community court model to more “typical” American settings. This monograph describes Hartford’s adaptations of the model and outlines an evaluation plan for assessing its progress and impact. The evaluation plan provides a means for measuring the progress of the Hartford Community Court in meeting its ambitious objectives. It also offers a framework for evaluating adaptations of the model that will have broader application as other jurisdictions recognize the need to assess their newly formed community court initiatives.

The Midtown Community Court Prototype

The nation’s first community court opened in midtown Manhattan in October 1993 after 2 years of planning. The Midtown Community Court was the product of a collaboration among a large number of partners, including the Fund for the City of New York, the New York State Unified Court System, and representatives of the business and residential communities in and

around Times Square and the Clinton and Chelsea neighborhoods in Manhattan. The planning process included input from numerous corporations and foundations, social service agencies, and civic groups. The main focus of the Midtown court was to respond to low-level, quality-of-life crimes that affect life, civility, and safety in these neighborhoods and to make the justice system more accessible and responsive to local residents and businesses. It was designed to respond to a growing need in these communities to address crime-related problems that were ignored or given low priority by the larger justice system because of the high volume of more serious matters it was struggling to address. By default, low-level misdemeanors, and public order and nuisance offenses—which, in the view of residents, affected the quality of life in these areas more than murders, rapes, robberies, and drug trafficking—seemed to occur with impunity or received no more than a “revolving door” response of arrest and release with few formal consequences.

The ambitious aims of the Midtown Community Court have been described in detail elsewhere.² In addition to having a dramatic impact in the targeted areas of New York City, the philosophy, methods, and aims of the Midtown experiment reflected the concerns of other communities across the United States as they struggled with problems of minor and nuisance offenses affecting everyday life in their neighborhoods.

The community court model views graffiti, prostitution, littering, public drinking, public urination, excessive noise, and a host of other “nuisance” offenses as potentially serious and by no means “victimless” crimes because they have detrimental effects on the neighborhoods and business districts. Built on the belief that these offenses, left unchecked, create negative perceptions of the attractiveness and safety of particular areas, as well as an impression of tolerance for disorder that may invite more serious crime, the Midtown strategy targeted these kinds of crimes.³

Some of the priorities identified by the Manhattan prototype that appealed to other jurisdictions included the need for a tangible response to communities affected by crime, the need to restore the credibility of the justice system among both the public and offenders, the need to provide community members with regular access to the justice process, and the need to reduce the behaviors contributing to these problems in targeted neighborhoods by providing access to a broad range of social services to both offenders and law-abiding community residents. Assignments of community service as sanctions for cases processed by the community court provided visible evidence of the court’s response to community crime problems and direct compensation to the community for some of the harm suffered from low-level crime. Community service

is the principal sanction employed by the Midtown court to link court processes to the community.

The Midtown model sought to provide an appropriate response to low-level crimes by devising a range of sanctions and services to hold offenders accountable, help offenders lead more productive lives, and demonstrate to residential and business community members that their problems and concerns were being addressed constructively. At the same time, community court advocates argued that the larger court system would benefit from the community court's effort to remove processing of low-level misdemeanors and ordinance violations from their caseloads, freeing up court resources to deal with more serious cases.

Thus, the objectives of the community court center around providing a more effective response to low-level crimes than the traditional courts. Offenders learn that their actions have consequences, the police are assured that their arrests of low-level offenders will have an

impact, and community members know that when they report minor offenses, action will be taken. The justice system becomes more credible to offenders and law-abiding citizens alike, as well as more visible, accessible, and accountable to the citizens.

The Midtown strategy also facilitates access to a range of social services to help offenders address problems that contribute to their criminal behavior, including drug and/or alcohol addiction, mental illness or disability, homelessness, lack of basic education or job skills, or, in the case of young offenders, lack of parental supervision combined with a lack of positive outlets and guidance. The Midtown court provides onsite services such as English as a Second Language and general equivalency diploma classes, basic health screening, AIDS/HIV awareness programs, vocational and employment counseling, and facilitated access to a network of drug, alcohol, and mental health treatment providers. The services are also available to the surrounding community.

II. Development of the Hartford Community Court

Rae Ann Palmer, director of Hartford's Comprehensive Communities Partnership, credits the beginnings of the Hartford Community Court to the vision of the city's mayor, Michael Peters. When the mayor took office in December 1993, Hartford's neighborhoods were suffering from gang warfare and drug-related crime. Many children of Hartford residents were leaving to raise their own families elsewhere, and the city's owner-occupied housing rate had declined to 20 percent. At the time, the mayor spoke with Palmer, a policy analyst on temporary assignment to the police department, about his vision for improving neighborhood conditions in Hartford. Hartford applied for and received a \$2.2 million federal grant to address these issues under the Comprehensive Communities Program (CCP) sponsored by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. Hartford used the grant to develop a strategic plan for neighborhood problem-solving committees to involve citizens in making neighborhoods more livable, and to improve the working relationship among law enforcement agencies and between the criminal justice system and the community. Using federal prosecution as a tool under provisions of the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act⁴ to

reduce the gang problem, Hartford then turned its attention to the challenge of finding a way to address quality-of-life issues that plagued the city's neighborhoods.

In exploring different strategies, Palmer learned of the community court approach piloted by the Midtown Community Court. The concept appeared to have potential for addressing Hartford's quality-of-life concerns and was proposed to Hartford State's Attorney Jim Thomas and other justice and municipal agency heads. In October 1996, a multiagency group including Palmer, the city manager, the chief of police, the state's attorney, and the director of the Office of Alternative Sanctions visited the Midtown court and were encouraged by what they learned. A working group representing key criminal justice agencies was assembled to begin planning for a community court in Hartford.

The community court concept represented a major challenge for the Connecticut judicial system, which was fairly traditional in many of its functions. One of the most difficult initial tasks for the planners was promoting the view that the community court should be a separate entity with distinct operations,

functions, and dedicated resources and not merely a special session added on to business of the regular court. Aaron Ment, then chief administrator of the Superior Court for Connecticut, was one of the project's early supporters. In May 1997, the Connecticut Senate passed legislation specifying the types of cases the community court would handle and the penalties offenders would face. The chief court administrator would evaluate the pilot program and provide recommendations to the General Assembly's Judiciary Committee on whether to expand the program to other Connecticut cities.⁵

Raymond Norko, former executive director of the Hartford County Legal Aid Society, became involved in the planning when he was appointed as the Hartford Community Court's first judge in July 1997. In October 1997, the Hartford City Council gave its official support to the effort by voting to enter into agreements with the state to implement the community court.⁶ Four homicides

that fall gave Hartford residents additional incentive to focus on crime and safety issues. Interestingly, although 5 of the city's 22 homicides occurred in one neighborhood that year, its residents nevertheless argued that prostitution, drug dealing, and nuisance offenses were the issues they wanted addressed by the city and the police. They, like residents of other neighborhoods, viewed the establishment of the community court as part of a multipronged strategy to deal with these problems and make their neighborhoods more livable.

Originally scheduled to open early in 1998, the Hartford Community Court's debut was delayed because of the extensive renovation of the building selected as its location. According to officials, the extra planning time was put to good use refining operational details and completing work on the information system. When the court opened on November 10, 1998, it had a clear and effective operational plan.

III. Key Elements of the Hartford Community Court Model

The Midtown Community Court served as the model and the inspiration for many community court initiatives, including Hartford's. As more jurisdictions have adapted the Midtown model to their local needs and circumstances, variations of the original approach have emerged. To help focus on key structural elements of the community court model for the purposes of evaluation and understanding its variations, the authors have proposed a working typology of community courts.⁷ The nine critical dimensions upon which courts vary—and around which evaluation of aspects of community courts can be organized—are the following:

- **Target problems.** Community courts differ in the kinds of problems they have been designed to address, including a wide range of low-level offenses, from public order violations, graffiti, nuisance crimes, prostitution, and minor drug offenses to illegal vending and panhandling.
- **Target locations.** Community court strategies differ in their geographic foci: some focus on specific neighborhoods while others focus on downtown business districts, rural areas, or entire cities.
- **Target populations.** Depending on the highest priority problems and the locations selected by community court strategies, courts also differ in the specific types of offenders and/or cases they will process.
- **Court processing focus and adaptations.** Community courts differ in structure to deal with the cases over which they have jurisdiction, whether as a special calendar of the regular criminal court calendar, a special part of the criminal court located in the same courthouse, or a separate unit located closer to the targeted geographic locations with an identity distinct from the larger court system. Different arrangements for the processing and disposition of community court cases are related to the different structural arrangements that characterize community courts.
- **Identifying, screening, and enrolling participants.** Community courts differ in the way they obtain their caseloads, ranging from formal diversion and reassignment of all minor matters from the larger caseload, to special arrangements with police and other screening agencies. How defendants are processed

into the court and are screened for services and recommended for particular sanctions also differ across the country.

- **Dispositional options and the structure and content of services.** The Midtown model piloted the concept of locating a large array of services in the court building so problems associated with court participants could be identified and addressed immediately. Courts vary in the kinds of dispositional options, sanctions, and services they employ and in the way they provide, locate, and structure sanctions and services.
- **Community involvement.** An important aspect of the community court innovation is “community involvement.” This is translated in different ways in different localities, sometimes referring primarily to a business community, sometimes to a residential community, or often to a mix of both. How that community gains access to the court and the role of the community differ from site to site as well.
- **Productivity (services delivered and impact per resource).** This dimension of community courts is especially important for evaluation. Courts differ in what they produce in terms of services delivered, offenders processed, sanctions assigned, community service produced, and linkages created. The productivity of the community court is tied to the

resources available and consumed in the process.

- **Extent of systemwide support and participation.** Building on the collaborative model of drug courts, community courts vary in the extent to which they represent a cooperative effort of a variety of agencies, including not only the obvious criminal justice partners but also health, treatment, and other government and social service agencies. Support from allied agencies determines the extent to which the community court is integrated into the justice system and the community.

Hartford Community Court planners knew they needed to adapt the Midtown model to meet the special challenges of Hartford neighborhoods. Like other community courts, the Hartford model represents new working relationships among the court, other criminal justice agencies, social service agencies, and the community. Other key ingredients of the Hartford model include the interior architecture of the court (designed with the flow of court business in mind), the availability of in-house social services, the presence of state and city social services representatives onsite, the use of community service sanctions, and the initial and ongoing connection to the community. One of the most compelling features of the Hartford model—making it stand out from other versions of the community court—is its incorporation of the concept of community by

establishing real and direct links with the city's 17 neighborhoods. The following discussion describes the Hartford Community Court model using the framework of the community court typology.

Target Problems

The problems disturbing the Hartford neighborhoods that contributed to the adoption of a community court strategy varied by location across the city. At a meeting of Hartford Areas Rally Together in 1997, a Frog Hollow resident expressed hope that the court would address his neighborhood's particularly troublesome problem with street prostitution.⁸ In the South End, a chief complaint appeared to be public drinking and excessive noise.⁹ In Asylum Hill, despite four homicides in fall 1997, residents cited prostitution and drug dealing as major concerns, along with drug possession, vandalism, and littering.¹⁰ Collectively, they were similar to the nuisance problems dealt with in Midtown and other community court sites, including graffiti, noise (particularly from "boom boxes" in cars "cruising" during late hours), low-level drug activity, young people loitering, public drinking, emergency room disorderly conduct, prostitution, and vagrancy. Excessive noise was the most frequent complaint.

Target Locations

The Hartford Community Court was designed to serve all of the city's neighborhoods, a reasonable

approach given Hartford's medium size, with a population of about 130,000 inhabitants, and an area that the planners believed could be served by a single, centrally located court. The citywide approach was necessitated by the already strong organization and mobilization of Hartford's 17 neighborhoods in its CCP effort, started in 1995. To focus on one or some of the neighborhoods would have appeared a breach of trust with others and raised serious political problems for the community court. In adopting this more inclusive approach, the Hartford target area nevertheless incorporated a population base smaller than that of the Midtown court.

The decision to include all of Hartford's neighborhoods meant that the court must serve 17 neighborhoods distinct from one another in their racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic composition. This created a dynamic more complex than that of courts serving more homogeneous target areas. As a matter of policy, the community court leaders involved each neighborhood in the planning from the start, in what officials describe as a grassroots effort, and the neighborhoods have maintained their active participation. This direct connection between the Hartford Community Court and community leaders has ensured that responding to the concerns of the different neighborhoods is central to the court's philosophy and operation.

CCP laid the groundwork for active involvement of the neighborhoods in planning strategies to reduce crime. Community organizations included residents, business owners, and community institutions, all considered to be stakeholders in the planning and operation of the community court. Court policy required that individuals who participated in community court guidance represent a group, so that individuals on their own could not take advantage of the community role to press personal or business agendas. Private service providers, for example, who might be inclined to view the neighborhood exclusively as their problem, were not at the table.

In practice, most of the court's cases since November 1998 have come from 15 neighborhoods. On its face, Hartford's decision to include the entire city within the scope of a single, centrally located community court appears to contradict the location-specific principle of the community court concept, which posits that a community court should be physically close to the people it serves. Holding aside the fact that the population base served by the Hartford Community Court is probably still less than that targeted by the Midtown Community Court in Manhattan, the Hartford planners have devised an approach that, despite its citywide scope, involves each of the designated neighborhoods in a very direct way. Despite the fact that the courthouse is not "around the corner" for many residents, neighborhoods appear to feel

strongly invested in the court. Hartford has accomplished this through an inclusive process that builds in a role for the community, in a real and practical way, and through careful design of the courthouse space that creates an atmosphere that is open and welcoming, and processes that are comprehensible, respectful, and accessible. Thus, although the scope of the target area is ambitious and challenging for the court, the medium size, geographic layout, and make-up of the city appear to make such an approach feasible.

Target Populations

The Hartford Community Court processes cases of defendants in a wide range of nonviolent public nuisance complaints (ordinance violations) and misdemeanor offenses that are not eligible for other specialty courts. These cases include public drinking, underage drinking, disorderly conduct, excessive noise, prostitution, solicitation, loitering, trespassing, littering, illegal gambling, larceny, and graffiti. According to the court's estimates, drug involvement is high among offenders who commit the targeted offenses. Statistics maintained by the court's social services team indicate that about 60 percent of the court's caseload involves drugs, including most theft cases and 100 percent of prostitution cases. To have their cases heard in community court, offenders must be at least 16 years of age (the age at which juveniles are treated as adults in

Connecticut's criminal justice system).¹¹ About 1 to 2 percent of the offenders targeted by the Hartford Community Court are undocumented immigrants.

Court Processing Focus and Adaptations

The court operates 5 days a week, from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. The bail commissioners start work early to begin receiving the first defendants. Community service staff arrive at 8 a.m. Court hours are not fixed. Although the first session generally begins at about 10 a.m., the hours depend on the size of the docket on a given day. A typical day brings between 20 and 40 arraignments, with an average in 1999 of 30 per day and an astounding peak of 125.¹² The judge spends about 3 hours on the bench, divided between morning and afternoon sessions. But the court is productive even when the judge is not on the bench. In addition to the judge's time, there are five blocks of time involved in the court process for each defendant: meetings with the bail commissioner, the prosecutor, the public defender, community service agencies, and social services. Courtroom days involve little wasted time because some staff are always working with the defendant.

The jurisdiction of the Hartford court was established during the planning stage by both state statute and local ordinance. In May 1997, the Connecticut Legislature passed a bill establishing the community

court's jurisdiction in terms of the types of cases it could hear and the sanctions it could impose, with a view toward creating a model in Hartford that could be emulated in other locations in the state. The Hartford City Council designated specific categories of ordinance violations as community court eligible.¹³ Except in instances in which defendant chooses to go to trial in Superior Court, the community court's jurisdiction in these types of cases is not negotiable, as it may be in many community courts such as Midtown where the prosecutor may determine which cases are eligible.

The Hartford Community Court is primarily a plea court, although it heard up to 10 contested cases during its first 18 months, usually involving a municipal ordinance violation and always resulting in a bench trial. Most defendants appear in court without a lawyer (which sometimes raises due process concerns and defendants occasionally alleging coercion), although the public defender is on hand to provide legal counsel.

Offenders charged with community-court-eligible offenses may be issued a summons or arrested. The clerk's office receives police reports and compiles other relevant information for the court as soon as an arrest occurs. About 80 percent are issued summonses to appear within 2 court business days. When a summons is issued, the police do an immediate check for outstanding

Hartford warrants. The court's summons process was developed to provide a more immediate response to the illegal act and have a stronger impact on the offender than the lengthy processing that occurs in traditional courts. Individuals with prior records, histories of Failure to Appear (FTA), or other issues that warrant secured release are placed under arrest and, if they fail to post bail, are held in custody until their hearings. These so-called "lockup" cases are processed separately.¹⁴

Failures To Appear

Defendants who fail to appear on summonses are taken off the community court track. Expedited bench warrants are issued on defendants who have been released from custody on a Promise to Appear (PTA) and who subsequently fail to appear in court, as well as on defendants who fail to appear for community service, or who have a series of FTAs. Their names are placed on a Take Into Custody (TIC) List. Defendants who come out of lock-up or who chronically fail to appear (three or more times) are given a "no mercy" designation. When they are apprehended, the judge usually will accept no excuses and may impose a jail sentence of up to 30 days, then take a plea, send the defendant to social services, and give credit for time served.

Defendants who successfully complete the terms of their sentences are placed on the disposition docket approximately 30 days after completion for dismissal of their

cases and ultimate expungement of their arrest records. They are not required to return to court for the dismissal of their cases. This feature is a benefit for defendants and facilitates movement of the caseload within the court. Drug cases, limited to first-time simple possession of marijuana of less than 4 ounces, are not dismissed.

Regardless of their case outcomes, the court maintains a list of all participants. With the exception of drug cases, defendants rearrested on eligible charges are allowed to return to community court as long as there is continuing need and opportunity for social intervention. The court expects a certain amount of recidivism and views it as an opportunity for further intervention. The court takes a harder stance on purely criminal repeat offending and/or repeated FTAs, often requiring additional community service hours and/or jail time for subsequent offenses. Defendants charged with simple possession of marijuana can receive only one community court disposition. Subsequent drug arrests are referred to the regular court.

Physical Setting

Hartford planners believed that the court needed to be a physically separate entity and facility, designed to facilitate the court process. Although the court uses a network of community-based social service providers, planners believed that, as far as possible, a community court should provide social services onsite and create an atmosphere

different from the impersonal, dehumanizing experience associated with the regular criminal courts, making court processes and services more accessible, comprehensible, and “user friendly” to both offenders and community members.

Site selection was one of the more difficult aspects of planning, raising the question of whether to lease private space or renovate state-owned property. The site chosen was at 80 Washington Street, a state-owned property on the periphery of the downtown area in the Frog Hollow neighborhood, which has one of the higher crime rates in Hartford. Centrally located in the judicial corridor between Hartford’s criminal and civil courthouses, it offered convenience to the population accustomed to appearing for judicial matters in this neighborhood, eliminating the need to promote a new location and possibly keeping down the FTA rate among defendants. Also, the site was easily accessible by bus, car, or foot from most neighborhoods and close to other services.

Building renovations were expected to be more cost effective in the long run than leasing private property.¹⁵ The state provided \$5.5 million in bond money for the renovations.¹⁶ It took planners 6 months to figure out the flow of defendants through the community court process and develop the architectural plan to support it. Each revision of the architects’ plans was publicly posted for review and comment. A jury box was included in the design of the

courtroom to provide maximum flexibility (for use as a standard courtroom if the need should ever arise).

The building provides 54,000 square feet of space. The upper level houses the bail commissioners, community court, housing court, public defender’s office, and human services. The lower level houses judicial and administrative offices. The proximity of the “regular” court across the street serves as a visual reminder to offenders of the other alternatives. Not surprisingly, most defendants seem to prefer the community court option. Although sharing the space with the housing session required some design concessions in terms of traffic flow in the building, the layout nevertheless effectively mirrors and facilitates the movement of defendants through the court process. The building is well appointed and the atmosphere is orderly and pleasant, a visual affirmation of the belief that the community court should treat its “clients” and community members who come to participate in the process with dignity and respect.

Identifying, Screening, and Enrolling Participants

Hartford Community Court defendants pass through a 5-step process, usually completed in 1 day, which is described below and illustrated in figure 1. (An entire episode of community court involvement from summons or arrest through dismissal takes 30 to 45 days, barring

delays in completing community service or issues that call for longer term monitoring and repeated court visits.)

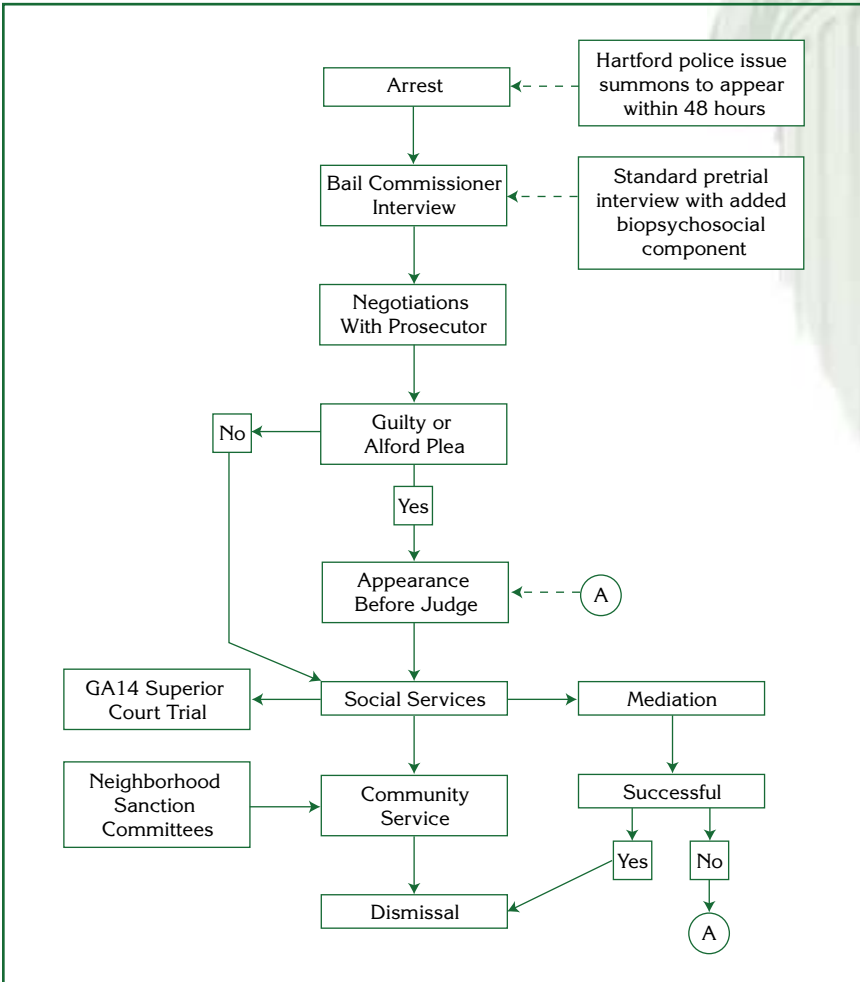
Interview with the bail commissioner. When defendants arrive at the court, their first stop is the office of the bail commissioners. Two onsite bail commissioners interview defendants, playing a role similar to that of pretrial services. They verify personal information, review criminal records, and check for outstanding warrants and documented mental health issues. For the community court, a psychosocial component has been added to the standard bail interview. The information is entered directly into the court's management information system (MIS) and will be available to the court in determining pretrial release conditions. If a defendant comes to court under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or in an otherwise unstable condition, the bail commissioner is authorized immediately to send the defendant to the appropriate facility for evaluation and treatment. In addition to their traditional court role, each of the two bail commissioners contributes special expertise and connections that they use to benefit defendants. Both are very good in working with young adult defendants and both conduct youth groups in addition to their regular duties.

Negotiations with the prosecutor. Although the court session generally begins at 10 a.m., courtroom activity starts at about 9 a.m. In open

court, the state prosecutor begins to review the cases on the docket and discusses with defendants the specifics of their cases, the requirements of participation in the court (i.e., a guilty or conditional guilty plea and a community service sentence), and whether or not they are willing to enter a plea in exchange for subsequent dismissal of the case.

Appearance before the judge. The judge takes the bench at about 10 a.m. with defendants seated in the courtroom. The court maintains five dockets: an arraignment docket, an 8 a.m. regular (or community service) docket, a 10 a.m. regular docket, a disposition docket, and a Prostitution Protocol docket. The arraignment docket includes first appearances for defendants who have received summonses to appear within 48 hours of their arrest (the "A" list), or who have been taken into custody (the "B" list). The 8 a.m. regular docket consists of defendants required to appear at that time to carry out their community service assignments. The 10 a.m. regular docket consists of defendants whose cases have been continued for any of a variety of reasons, including an immediate need for social services prior to court appearance or an attempt to resolve an issue through mediation. Defendants who have been unsuccessful in mediation are scheduled for a return visit to court on the regular docket and receive standard community service sentences.

Figure 1
Hartford Community Court Process



After the judge takes the bench, he reads the Advisement of Rights, advising defendants of their Miranda rights to trial and to counsel. A translator repeats the Advisement in Spanish. As each arraignment case is called, the prosecutor presents the case to the judge, indicates the charges, and announces whether

or not a plea agreement has been reached. Defendants who have obvious issues involving stability or ability to understand what is going on are referred to social services, and their hearings are continued. If an agreement has been reached, it is read into the record and the prosecutor presents a statement of the

facts that includes all of the elements of the crime charged. If the defendant does not admit all the facts, but has decided to plead anyway, the judge explains an Alford (or conditional guilty) plea, and accepts this. If the defendant changes his mind and denies the facts, he is given an opportunity to consult with the public defender or his investigator as to where he stands should he elect to go to trial. Young defendants are given an opportunity to confer with parents or other individuals who have accompanied them to the hearing.

A defendant who claims to have an explanation or justification for the actions of which he or she is accused may be granted a continuance to provide documentation in support of that claim and, upon presentation, the case may be dismissed. Accessing the community court's management information system from the bench, the judge checks the defendant's record for open cases. In the same MIS, he examines his own notes, social services notes, and any remarks entered by the bail commissioner that pertain to the defendant's ability to perform community service. He questions the defendant about whether the plea was voluntary and ascertains that the defendant understands that he is waiving the right to trial and to counsel by entering an admission in community court.

Once the defendant acknowledges his understanding of the proceedings, the judge informs the defendant of

the amount of community service he is required to serve, the date and time that the service is to be performed, and that he should appear appropriately dressed to work. The defendant is also informed that the charges will be dismissed when the service has been completed in a satisfactory manner and given a date when this should happen. The defendant is then told that he need not appear in court to have his charges dismissed.

Defendants who are belligerent or disruptive during their interview with the prosecutor are heard later in the schedule so they have an opportunity to calm down and observe what happens to other defendants on similar cases. During one court session, a defendant charged with playing his car stereo too loudly, in violation of the local ordinance, was on the docket. He had been fairly loud in protesting his innocence, disparaging of the court and its proceedings, and refusing to do community service. His case was called toward the end of the docket after several similar cases had been heard and disposed of with a plea and community service. The judge was told that this defendant wanted a trial, so he was given time to consult with the public defender's investigator. When he returned to court, the defendant elected to enter an Alford plea and do community service, continuing to complain, although not as loudly as before, that it was unfair that the judge believed the police officer's version of the facts instead of his.

In-custody defendants include those who were unable to make bail. Generally these are defendants with histories of FTAs and more extensive criminal records. On one occasion, custody defendants included two young girls charged with larceny with no prior record, who would have been released to the custody of their parents had the parents appeared. Also included was a defendant charged with prostitution whose lengthy criminal history (four prior convictions) and numerous FTAs made her ineligible for the Prostitution Protocol. She had been held on \$5,000 cash bail and was returned to the detention facility by the judge, with her case scheduled to be heard again in 1 month, allowing time for the drugs that she was on to clear her system.

Screening by the social services department. Following arraignment, defendants are sent to the social services team in the same building for screening and service referrals. Social services screening is mandatory for all defendants, even those who elect to have their cases heard in the regular court. The sheriff's deputy escorts them to make sure they get there.

Meeting with the community service coordinator. The last step in the process is a meeting with the community service coordinator, who gives defendants information on the type of community service they are likely to perform and clarifies their schedule. The coordinator then reviews and has the defendant sign a community service contract,

detailing the behavioral and other requirements of service. In most cases, work assignments are made on the day the defendant appears for service.

Court operations are facilitated by an integrated MIS that was designed for the court by Frank DeLuca and has been in use since the opening day.¹⁷ The system imports client data from the state bail commission application and adds the results of the human services interview, community service notes, and other indicators of the defendant's performance. The application has a community service job bank and can track community service assignments and compliance.¹⁸ The judge and key court personnel have input and access and the community can provide online information on conditions in their neighborhoods. In addition to tracking community service outcomes, the application is now being used to follow up on social services referrals.

Dispositional Options and the Structure and Content of Services

The Hartford Community Court places a priority on providing social services to defendants, or at least trying to link them to services they can pursue after their community court experience. Unless referred directly to drug or other health services or found ineligible or uninterested in community court (some prefer to face trial on the charges), most defendants are sentenced to

community service. Some cases are resolved through mediation but rarely with the assessment of fines.

Community Service

Approximately 80 percent of the sanctions imposed by the community court are for community service in one of Hartford's 17 neighborhoods. The most common community service sentence for a first offense is 6 hours, while returning defendants or those charged with more serious offenses, such as simple possession of marijuana, may receive sentences of 12 hours or more. Sentences are generally to be served within 2 weeks. Many offenders choose to complete their sentences quickly and ask to perform their service the following day. The judge accommodates their preference—for the court, too, the sooner the better. The judge is equally willing to take into consideration work and school obligations that make it difficult to complete the sentence in the required time and may delay serving of the sentences on those grounds. If the judge believes it may be beneficial or make the task less onerous, co-defendants are put on the same work crew.

The community service unit has three vans and a truck to transport offenders to and from work sites. Participants wear blue vests bearing the community court logo, clearly identifying them as members of the community court work crew. They are required to report to the courthouse at 8 a.m. on the day or days

they have been scheduled to perform community service. Crews arrive at their designated work sites at 9 a.m. and work until 11 a.m. They are returned to the courthouse for lunch and group counseling, provided by the court, then transported back to the work site. Projects are usually completed by 2 p.m., when defendants are returned to court. Crew supervisors are from the neighborhoods. All tools are supplied by the court. Once a project is completed, a sign is put up and left for 4 days identifying the location as a community court service site and warning passersby that if they litter, they may be on the next crew. Reports vary as to the efficacy of these signs—some residents report that they keep litter down for the days they are in place, while others say that the litter merely accumulates around them.

There are currently approximately 180 community service projects in the court computer for the 17 neighborhoods that make up the city of Hartford; with few exceptions, these are court-run projects. Below is a breakdown of the number of community service sites by neighborhood:

- Northeast—54
- Frog Hollow—42
- Asylum Hill—40
- Barry Square—40
- Clay Arsenal—40
- Behind the Rocks—39
- Upper Albany—36
- Downtown—25
- Sheldon/Charter Oak—20

- South Green—16
- North Meadows—14
- South End—14
- Blue Hills—13
- Parkville—7
- West End—6
- South Meadows—5
- Southwest—1

Project ideas stem from initial surveys of community groups and continued input from the neighborhoods. The MIS can generate reports on completed projects and indicate whether neighbors would like to see more work done. The MIS also lists additional projects, which the Sanctions Committee reviews periodically.

The court initially tried to assign offenders to work in the neighborhoods where they had committed their offenses, to show the residents that there had been a response and that some reparations were being made. That approach, however desirable, proved to be impractical in part because most projects require entire crews, not individuals. Now the community service coordinator allocates work crews to neighborhoods in proportion to the arrests they generate. Some neighborhoods do not generate enough arrests to receive community service. On occasion, an offender who has committed a particularly public offense in a certain location may still be placed in that neighborhood to perform service, not only to “pay back” the residents in a direct way but also to send a message to other

potential offenders that the behavior in question will not be tolerated.

Anecdotal information on community service suggests a positive response by both participants and community residents. Neighborhood residents are so appreciative that they will sometimes join the cleanup effort. Some participants, particularly young adults, talk about finding themselves doing things for others that they have never even done for themselves or their families. Many derive a degree of satisfaction and some actually feel as if they are doing volunteer work. One standing work assignment, delivering food to the homeless and the need for Food Share, a local food bank, was reported as bringing participants particular satisfaction. Despite the good feelings, however, the consensus of the Sanctions Committee is that for most participants, public service in a bright blue vest emblazoned with the court logo is a humiliation they are not eager to experience again and a deterrent to repeating the same acts.

The Prostitution Protocol

Defendants arrested for prostitution and without extensive criminal histories or prior FTAs may be eligible for the Prostitution Protocol, a program of intensive counseling and education designed to show women involved in prostitution that alternatives exist. Women who participate in the program attend a

series of five weekly training sessions covering topics such as physical and emotional care, stress reduction and avoidance, self-esteem, goal setting, and achieving success. These sessions are followed by an individual counseling session to examine the participant's progress and needs. The protocol sessions are followed by a social services assessment and referrals to treatment and other services the participant may need. Completion of the program is also followed by 4 days of community service, not only to reinforce the fact that the participant's behavior has legal consequences but also to allow the court to maintain longer contact with the participant and make needed changes in long-term treatment. Protocol participants are required to appear in court for monitoring on a separate prostitution docket that is scheduled every 6 to 8 weeks. To date, according to court officials, there has been no recidivism for those who complete the program.

Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Testing Protocol

On June 29, 2000, the community court, in collaboration with the City of Hartford Health Department and the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health STD Control Program, implemented court-mandated testing for sexually transmitted diseases for defendants involved in sexually related offenses such as prostitution, solicitation, and public indecency.¹⁹ The STD

Protocol is a joint effort by these agencies to reach persons at high risk for STDs. It is based on work in other cities that has shown that screening in nonclinical, community-based settings is an effective STD prevention strategy. The primary target populations for the program are persons charged with solicitation, prostitutes who have not already been incarcerated and tested by the corrections department, and defendants facing charges of other sexually related crimes or fact patterns. A secondary target population who may be voluntarily referred for testing includes defendants exhibiting patterns of substance abuse problems, especially men and women under 25; defendants who may be considered at risk because of the fact patterns of their cases; and defendants recommended for testing by the Hartford Community Court social services staff. Defendants who test positive for STDs receive treatment from the City of Hartford Health Department. The court hopes to expand the program and make it an integral part of the Prostitution Protocol as well as of an education program for defendants charged with solicitation of prostitutes.

The first group of defendants was sent for testing on June 29, 2000, followed by a second group on July 20, and after that on alternating Thursdays. Defendants are transported directly from court to the health department for testing, then given transit fare to return home.

To maintain individuals' confidentiality, test results are reported back to the court in aggregate form.

Mediation

When community court arrests stem from disputes between two or more individuals, defendants are frequently referred to mediation as an initial step. The Hartford Area Mediation Program (HAMP) has been providing services to the community court since its opening, using a staff of trained volunteer mediators. HAMP was founded in 1984 as a pro bono project of the Aetna Law Department. It has been affiliated with the Connecticut Prison Association and has been providing community mediation services for the superior court since 1993. It is funded by the Office of Alternative Sanctions.

Mediation services are provided by full-time staff and trained community volunteers. In the process, a panel of mediators works with parties in conflict to help them reach a mutually acceptable, realistic resolution to the dispute that both parties will view as fair.²⁰ Participation is entirely voluntary. Once the defendants have gone through this process, they are required to make another court appearance. If mediation has been successful and the dispute has been resolved in a mutually agreeable manner, the parties sign a written agreement, which is provided to the state's attorney's office. No further sanctions are imposed and the case is dismissed. If mediation

has been unsuccessful, the judge will impose a regular community service sanction on the disputing parties. According to the court's statistics, about 365 cases a year go through this process, with a success rate of approximately 65 percent.²¹

Essays

The essay, a sanction devised by the court with Hartford's student population in mind, is assigned primarily to students charged with underage drinking and public disorder. Students from local colleges, universities, and high schools are often required to write essays on their behavior and sometimes letters of apology to neighborhoods or individuals affected by their actions. Followup by the court may include contact with parents and/or school officials advising them of the sanction and the reasons for it. This sanction has yielded some thoughtful essays, recently compiled and analyzed for the court.²² About two-thirds of the 132 essays analyzed were by students of one area university, 9 percent were by students of a local college, and 23 percent were by other students and Hartford citizens. Topic areas identified included remorse, lessons learned from the experience, the fairness of the punishment, and the quality of the program. Of the university and college groups, one-half to two-thirds expressed remorse in their essays, and the majority (84 and 83 percent, respectively) felt that the experience had taught them a valuable lesson. Few expressed

opinions about the fairness of the punishment (10 and 42 percent of the student groups, respectively, believed it was fair, but the majority did not offer an opinion). Fewer still expressed any thoughts about the quality of the program.

Other Sanctions

Fines and jail sentences are both options that are available to the community court judge but are rarely used. A noise ordinance violation, for example, may bring a penalty of community service, a fine of up to \$90, or a jail sentence of up to 25 days by the community court.²³ Monetary restitution may be imposed. These matters are sent to either the mediation unit or the public defender for tracking of payments and cases are continued until the restitution is paid.

Social and Health Services

By design, the Hartford Community Court provides services in a way that reorganizes the social aspects of their delivery, integrates state and city agencies, and creates a client-centered delivery system. The agencies and the court accommodate the needs of the client/offender, as well as the concerns of the community, in a way that the regular court system and large bureaucratic social services agencies, operating independently and in the traditional manner, have been unable to do.

The social service providers onsite—the City of Hartford Human Services Department, the State Department of Social Services, and the State Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS)—are the same agencies that serve clients from large downtown offices, but in the community court setting they are able to deliver these services more efficiently, in a more personal, client-friendly environment. According to agency representatives, the constellation of agencies in the court has been a significant benefit. For example, the State Department of Social Services is usually able to arrange immediate activation of entitlements for its community court clients, which in turn may enable DMHAS to access a wider range of treatment resources and arrange for clients to be placed in treatment directly from court. The arrangement also provides continuity for the client and avoids duplication of efforts by the agencies. Defendants who are already clients of the state social services system are referred to a state social services representative.

Although a wide range of services is available to defendants, the court has avoided imposing so many social services conditions that they would make a defendant prone to failure. The belief is that the brief contact with the system that a single community court arrest provides is not sufficient to affect a major change in a defendant's life. Nevertheless, any social services that the

defendant is determined to need are mandated by the court, and social workers have the authority to inform the defendant that the conditions they impose are part of the court's order. In special cases, these mandates are placed in court during sentencing, after the social services interview.

By policy, the Hartford Community Court's onsite services are available to both defendants and community residents. The social services representatives conduct needs assessments of all defendants who enter the court process, even those who decline to enter a plea and are sent back to the regular court. These assessments may result in referrals to substance abuse treatment, medical and mental health services, or on-the-spot processing of applications for medical assistance, general assistance, food stamps, and other entitlements. Defendants and community residents alike have access to services such as general equivalency diploma classes, job training and placement assistance, and housing information. Groups are conducted in English and Spanish for substance abuse education and life skills training.

Special interventions for the mentally or behaviorally disabled are provided onsite by two mental health social workers and one registered nurse from DMHAS who have immediate access to a full range of mental health services. Each day, the names on the court docket are

compared to the DMHAS database to identify any defendants who have had prior contacts related to mental health or substance abuse issues. DMHAS staff interview all defendants found in the DMHAS system as well as any referred by the court staff, family members, or community agencies to determine current treatment needs and arrange for services. The unit conducts weekly substance abuse education classes in English and Spanish for defendants arrested on alcohol- or drug-related charges.²⁴ Approximately 20 percent of court defendants require mental health services. Often, defendants with obvious or serious issues are not required to perform community service and are sent directly to social services.

The social services representatives who are placed in the community court find that they are able to be more responsive to their clients than they might be at the main office, partly as a function of scale. Defendants are treated with more respect than they encounter in the impersonal environment of the main office. They are assisted in accessing services that they may have needed and been unable to get on their own. Often, these are individuals who have fallen through the cracks of the social services system, such as the homeless and the mentally ill who may not know that they need help or where to go for it. The intent of the court is to keep these individuals out of jail by getting them the assistance they need.

Community Involvement

Planning and implementation of the Hartford Community Court began in a climate of community coalition building, the groundwork for which had been laid through the efforts of the CCP program. By the time discussions of the proposed court began, community groups from Hartford's 17 neighborhoods were mobilized and convinced that such an effort would help to address their needs and concerns. To restrict the court to a single neighborhood, even in a pilot phase, would at that point have been unthinkable to the Hartford planners. Thus, they decided to build on the strength of that community involvement and go citywide with their effort.

Planning involved coalitions such as Hartford Areas Rally Together, the United Connecticut Action for Neighborhoods (UCAN), and the Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance, as well as neighborhood groups such as the Blue Hills Civic Association, the Asylum Hill Organizing Project, and the Asylum Hill Revitalization Association. The idea of the community court was first presented to neighborhood groups in Hartford in late 1996 and they embraced it. UCAN played a particularly active role in research for the planning of court operations. From the beginning, there was a sense that the new court had to be accompanied by changes in the way the Hartford police conducted business and recognized the importance of responding to low-level matters.²⁵

A review of the archives of the local newspaper, the *Hartford Courant*, from late 1996 onward shows the community court as a standing item on the agendas of most neighborhood associations. Neighborhood residents were vocal in their anticipation of the court and the impact it would have on their neighborhoods. They were equally vocal in expressing their concerns over delays in the opening of the court.

Beyond the planning and implementation stages, neighborhood groups and residents have continued to be included in the functioning of the court. Formally, community involvement still involves CCP. Community court representatives go to CCP meetings and CCP community organization members then go to community court. Although the community organizations realize they cannot directly address the more serious crimes such as homicides, they now feel they can have an immediate impact on quality-of-life matters.

Community residents are strong supporters of the court. They are most directly affected by the issues the community court addresses, and they feel empowered because they have played a role in the structuring of the court. They have been asked which types of crime problems are most important to them, which areas of town have the most pressing issues, what types of community services are needed, and where

community services should be performed.²⁶ When a community service project is completed, residents are even asked if it was done right.

Community members have access to all the administrative areas of the courthouse. They attend staff meetings and participate in making operational decisions and setting priorities for the court, including identifying problems in the neighborhoods that they would like the court to address and pinpointing areas that would benefit from the work of a community service crew. A Sanctions Committee of representatives from each of Hartford's neighborhoods and some of the organizers who initially participated in community relations development meet monthly to discuss these issues. In addition, community members are recruited to serve as mediators in HAMP.

Extent of Systemwide Support and Participation

Despite the success of community courts across the country, the challenges they pose to traditional roles continue to make systemwide support and participation an issue for discussion and evaluation. As the history of the Hartford court's implementation demonstrates, its planners were fortunate in finding a broad base of support early in the process from the municipal administration, the criminal justice system, and the city and state health and social services systems. At the municipal level, support and collaboration

came from the mayor, the city manager, the city council, the Department of Information Services, and the Department of Human Services. From the Connecticut judicial branch, the Office of Alternative Sanctions was involved from the early planning stages onward, as was the Bail Commission, whose two representatives in the courthouse are the important first step in the court process.

The willingness of the judge to assume a role that involves social work as much as it does administering justice is critical to the operation of a community court, as is a willingness to be constantly under public scrutiny. Judge Noriko, appointed early during the planning stage, accepted both aspects of the role and immediately became deeply immersed in the community-driven planning process.

Hartford's Chief State's Attorney Jim Thomas was initially skeptical, but following a visit to the Midtown court, he became an enthusiastic supporter of the community court concept. He was a key player in the planning and his full "buy in" is evident from the completely nonadversarial role that the state's prosecutor plays in the court process. Glenn Kaas, the assistant state's attorney who has served as prosecutor since the court opened, derives satisfaction from the nontraditional role he plays in the courtroom, ". . . not as much enforcing state statutes and city ordinances as . . . seeking compliance with contemporary

community standards.⁷²⁷ In Hartford, the public defender still takes a more traditional view of his clients' best interests and continues to express concerns about due process and net widening in the community court.

An important feature of the Hartford court is the collaborative participation of state and city social services agencies. Although the city took the early lead in providing social services, an arrangement was negotiated whereby responsibility could be shared with state agencies. The resulting service delivery system is virtually seamless. Defendants who are already clients of the state social services system have the benefit of continuity of services in the court setting and, in general, the arrangement is more efficient for all the agencies. Agency representatives find that the collaboration enhances their ability to provide effective services to their clients.

Special Significance of the Hartford Police Department

Cooperation between the Hartford Police Department and the Hartford Community Court is important to the success of the court and the enforcement of quality-of-life violations. During the planning stages, the Hartford police were active participants, particularly in resolving two major issues confronting the court: the summons procedure and the 48-hour processing of paperwork

to facilitate movement of cases into the court.

A great deal of turmoil within the Hartford Police Department in recent months contributed to reduced enforcement of quality-of-life crimes. The police chief and several top administrators retired, and permanent leadership has not emerged to give the department direction. Additionally, an independent evaluation of the Hartford Police Department covering every aspect of its organization and operations engendered a great deal of controversy. One consequence of these difficulties was a reduction in community policing. For the most part, the department reverted to a reactive, 911-driven operation, organized primarily to respond to service calls.

These problems led to a reduction in the numbers of police officers serving the department as well as low morale. Although the reduction in arrests produced a lower court caseload in the system overall, the impact was particularly felt by the community court. Without officers on the streets making arrests for the types of low-level crimes and ordinance violations that enter the community court, the numbers of community court cases were down, threatening the viability of the innovation. During the court's 15th and 16th months of operation, the reduction in cases became alarmingly apparent.

Police cooperation in the enforcement of quality-of-life offenses and in working with the courts and neighborhoods to address community crime problems is essential to the community court strategy. The Community Response Division of the Hartford Police Department is a critical link between the aims of the court and the community policing aspirations of the department. Currently, the division is not sufficiently supported to realize its full potential in dealing with neighborhood problems. Individually, certain community service officers have developed constructive relationships with the community court, believing that the court offers an immediate and visible response to the quality-of-life offenses that are so disruptive to the community and a convenient way to process the most frequent types of complaints.

To these officers, issuing summonses makes processing offenders much easier than completing the paperwork required for a normal arrest that would be adjudicated in the traditional court, where little may happen to the offender for the efforts involved. They believe the risk of a community court arrest

deters criminals from carrying guns or drugs because they fear being caught with these when arrested on a minor matter such as loitering. The officers also believe the community service sanction is a strong deterrent for the types of offenders targeted by the court. They have noted a particularly positive impact on open prostitution in some neighborhoods.

In May 2000, as part of a quality-of-life enforcement action supported by a BJA Local Law Enforcement Block Grant and conducted by the Community Response Division, police officials met with the community court team and community representatives to identify quality-of-life problems and high-priority target areas or “hotspots” in each neighborhood. Those priority areas have been reviewed periodically since then and have been the focus of enforcement activity. During that time, the community court has seen a steady growth in the number of cases it receives, leveling off near expected peak levels, particularly in the area of crimes identified by residents and the court as vital for enforcement: public drinking and excessive noise.²⁸

IV. Implementation and Outcome Goals in the Early-Stage Evaluation of the Hartford Community Court

As remarkable as the development of the Hartford Community Court appears to have been, design of an evaluation approach must begin with the recognition that the court has been in operation for a relatively short period of time. It is reasonable to consider the first 2 years of operation of such an ambitious new approach as formative, when planned procedures move from paper to practice and a wide variety of implementation issues have to be addressed. During the pilot period of a planned model, the new program places greater emphasis on implementation (putting the full model into operation and making adjustments) and less emphasis on outcomes (tracing the longer term effects of its activities) than a more established program. The evaluation plan we propose will measure both implementation-oriented and outcome-related aspects of the Hartford Community Court, focusing on critical dimensions of its operation as suggested by the community court typology.

To prioritize the questions the evaluation might reasonably address, table 1 organizes the court's implementation and outcome objectives

under three headings: those dealing with the individual participant or offender, those having implications for the larger court and/or larger justice system, and those involving the community. So, for example, the evaluation can ask how well the community court has identified candidates from its self-defined target population and how effectively the court process has screened participants for need and linked them to relevant services. The evaluation can also ask how well the court has disposed of individual cases in a way reflecting the aims of the community court model. Implementation-level questions would focus on the volume of cases entering, case dispositions, referrals to services, and the use of community service in the context of resources expended.

The community court approach was argued to have positive effects on the larger court and justice system. Thus, the evaluation will also assess the extent to which planned mechanisms were actually put in place and the anticipated impact was achieved, for example, measuring the extent to which cases were actually transferred from traditional processing to the community court.

Table 1
Measuring Community Court Objectives at the Implementation and Outcome Stages by Type

Stage	Objective		
	Individual/Offender	Courts/Justice	Community
Implementation	Identify/enroll participants. Begin/modify new process. Organize necessary services. Deliver services to participants. Dispose of cases. Start community service. Monitor services delivered. Monitor performance of participants. Deploy resources.	Cooperation among agencies. Enhance working relationships. Implement new service delivery system. New problem-oriented method. Accountability mechanism/information. Enrolling caseload/impact on larger system. Dispositions. Different sanctions. Resources deployed.	Implement community role. Improve community access. Identify community priorities. Services affecting community/neighborhoods.
Outcome	Numbers enrolled. Dispositions assigned. Results of dispositions. Delivery of services. Impact of services. Performance in court/supervision. Followup of participants post-court. Results per resources used. Changes in expectations about offending.	New working relationships. Improved service delivery. Improved arrests/processing. Flow of cases/volume. Impact on larger courts/decreased volume. Impact of dispositions. Accountability results. Impact on resources.	Different community role. Community access achieved. Results in identified community priorities. Community satisfaction. Community service delivered. Neighborhood impacts. Changes in expectations about courts/justice.

Building a sufficient and appropriate caseload is an important implementation aim that has implications for the community court’s effectiveness overall as well as for the larger court system. In its implementation focus, the evaluation will also examine the role of the community in the operations of the court, and how the

community was involved in problem identification and problem solving. Given the centrality of “community” in the community court model, measuring the extent to which a new working relationship with the community has been put into operation and identifying the issues and problems associated with that

process are critical implementation subjects.

Admittedly, the difference between implementation and outcome measures is not always clear. For example, one might argue that enrolling targeted participants in the community court is an outcome—a desired end result—not just an implementation stage goal. That is, the question might be, “Compared to practically nothing being done about certain kinds of nuisance offenders, what impact is the community court having?” In this case, mobilizing the police to attend to these matters and to issue summonses to community court might represent an important impact or outcome, regardless of what else happens in individual cases.

One might equally argue that simply putting services in place that never before existed, or that were never made accessible to the target population, is an outcome, a desired end product. That overlap between implementation and outcome measures noted, however, some objectives are more results oriented and can be viewed as an effect or impact that a community court is expected to deliver. Thus, for example, the evaluation will measure the extent to which the targeted population of nuisance offenders is reached using community court numbers of persons enrolled in court processes in contrast to the number available in the target population. The dispositions of the cases processed in community court will be examined, with

a special emphasis on the assignment of community service.

The extent to which the community court enrolls its population might be considered an important implementation question. The types of dispositions in those cases, services delivered, and community service assigned might be viewed as outcomes delivered by the court. At the individual level, outcomes include whether or not arrestees attended court, the sentences in their cases, the services employed, the results of participation in services, the requirements of the sentences fulfilled, and whether or not individuals reoffended. These outcomes could also be evaluated in the context of resources expended.

Outcomes or impacts related to the larger court and justice system might be related to the number of cases redirected from the traditional court caseload to the community court; the different dispositions employed; the rates of compliance with fines, community service, or other sanctions; and the treatment provided and completed in various physical and behavioral health areas that would not normally have been the case. System impacts of importance might be effects on other agencies in the justice system—such as the role of the police—or in the health or other social services systems to determine whether procedures and outcomes have been improved by the community court approach.

Measuring of the impact of the community court on the community may be the most difficult evaluation task. However, several presumed impacts can be identified from the aims of the Hartford Community Court, which rest on developing a new kind of involvement by the community in the matters of the court. That involvement implies a new role in problem identification and problem solving. The evaluation can determine through interviews and observation to what extent this has occurred. Second, a premise underlying the Hartford approach is that the dispositions meted out in community court will in some way restore or repay the community for the harms it has suffered by means of community service assignments carried out by offenders and/or through assistance provided to community justice

residents who are offenders within the jurisdiction of the court. The evaluation will seek to measure these kinds of tangible impacts posited by the community court model.

Finally, the community court model has another important community-level objective that is much harder to measure, namely, greater access to and satisfaction with court and justice processes by the community. Improved access to the courts, receptiveness by court personnel, and user satisfaction with the community court experience are all difficult outcomes to measure. However, perhaps the most challenging outcomes are changed attitudes of communities toward the justice system and their perceptions about the quality of life in their neighborhoods.

V. Evaluation Design: Data Collection Strategy

This chapter describes in more detail how, within resource constraints, some of the more important evaluation questions can be addressed. The proposed approach is intended to serve as the basis for discussion among Hartford Community Court officials, so that specific issues or data may be included or so that the general approach can be adapted to reflect the issues and questions viewed as most important locally.

Assessing Implementation-Related Objectives

Before the evaluation asks what difference the community court makes in a comparative sense, it should investigate questions related to its implementation. Logically, before research can answer the question “Does it work?” using an acceptable comparative framework, it should ascertain whether and to what extent the community court model was actually implemented. Measurement of implementation objectives is critical, particularly in assessing the contributions of young programs. Assessing progress in reaching implementation-stage objectives can provide useful feedback for making adjustments to improve performance.

Table 2 organizes the proposed data collection plan for the early-stage evaluation of the Hartford Community Court according to implementation and outcome evaluation questions. The first section (table 2a) suggests seven different data collection approaches designed to measure progress the court has made in implementing its strategy.

1. Descriptive History of the Hartford Community Court

An important early evaluation task will be to compile a history of the planning, development, and implementation of the Hartford Community Court. This task will involve assembling available documentation, grant applications, meeting minutes, and other relevant materials, as well as conducting interviews with relevant actors in the process. The aim of this descriptive task is to create a record of the kinds of issues addressed and the ways in which the Midtown model was adapted to meet the needs of the Hartford setting. Obstacles to implementation are of particular interest as are solutions to difficult problems that the implementation process encountered.

Table 2a

Evaluation of the Hartford Community Court: Summary of Proposed Sampling and Data Collection Strategies: Implementation

IMPLEMENTATION ORIENTED			
Evaluation Focus	Data/Sample	Source	Research Purpose
1. History: planning/implementation of community court, including role of community.	Interview/ documents.	Court, related agencies.	Overview of the development and implementation of the community court. Emphasis on principal goals, issues, and obstacles encountered, solutions. Summary of Hartford model.
2. Context: arrest patterns before and during community court operation.	Aggregate arrest/ call for service/ summons/citation data showing trends for targeted types of offenses, by neighborhood/ location.	Hartford Police Department.	Provide background showing extent to which targeted offenses were dealt with by police before and during community court, by neighborhood locations. Identify any changes in police practices by neighborhoods.
3. Volume/flow of target cases into court system before and during community court operation.	Aggregate court caseload data for targeted types of cases before and during first 2 years of community court. Matters received and disposed.	Judicial system data.	Aggregate analysis examining caseload, volume, disposition of types of cases targeted by community court before and during operation. Determine extent to which court changed processing of targeted cases. Assess transfer or creation of caseload.
4. Extent to which community court reached its target population.	Police and court system aggregate data.	Police, judicial system.	Measure the extent to which the community court engaged its targeted population.

Table 2a (continued)

Evaluation of the Hartford Community Court: Summary of Proposed Sampling and Data Collection Strategies: Implementation

IMPLEMENTATION ORIENTED			
Evaluation Focus	Data/Sample	Source	Research Purpose
5. Flow/process analysis of cases entering community court for disposition.	All community court cases/aggregate.	Community court records.	More specific flow analysis of cases processed in first 2 years from arrest to disposition. Illustrate operation of court, pinpoint any issues. Volume, types of cases, dispositions (aggregate).
6. Services delivered during first 2 years.	Aggregate community court and related agency data showing needs, referrals, use of services.	Court, treatment, other service and justice agencies.	Types of needs identified in community court processing, number of referrals made, services used, and implications. Estimates of costs of services employed.
7. Analysis of community court workload.	Daily activities of entire community court operation (beyond case disposition). Daily courtroom docket/dispositions.	Community court data.	Description of “business done” on a daily basis over time for a) entire operation over time; b) courtroom workday (kinds of matters heard/dispositions) over time.

2. Context of Crime in Hartford’s Neighborhoods

The evaluation will place the establishment of the Hartford Community Court in the context of the crime problems in Hartford’s neighborhoods, first for the period immediately preceding implementation of the court and second during

the court’s operation. Theoretically, the community court strategy was pursued to respond to crime-related problems affecting Hartford’s neighborhoods. Thus, the evaluation staff will need to collect location-specific arrest, summons, and call-for-service data reflecting the two periods of time to place court efforts in

the larger context of the citywide crime problems it was intended to address. Neighborhood-specific analysis of crime and calls for service should both set the stage for the “assignment” implicit for the court and provide a baseline against which changes in that picture, possibly related to the court’s efforts, can be assessed. One would expect that nuisance offenses did not result in police responses as often before the implementation of the community court as after. (Below it is noted that these data could be supplemented by neighborhood survey or focus group data that ask about neighborhood conditions before and during the court’s first phase of operation and about the possible contributions of the court in changing conditions or perceptions of neighborhood quality of life.)

3. Volume and Flow of Target Category Cases Into the Judicial System Before and During the First Phase of the Hartford Community Court

A basic assumption of the Hartford Community Court approach is that a large number of quality-of-life offenses have gone unaddressed without the special focus brought by the innovation. Theoretically, this untapped caseload has existed in one of two places: in the normal judicial system where they have been given short shrift, or in the form of nuisance

offenses that have not found their way into the judicial system. The second category of the untapped nuisance-offense caseload is difficult to measure and may be addressed in 2 above through neighborhood-specific analysis of calls for service, arrests, and summonses.

The first category, nuisance cases entering the judicial system but showing less than effective results, should be measurable. With the cooperation of the judicial system, researchers will need to obtain aggregate data showing the processing of these matters in the local courts prior to the establishment of the community court. These data will, on an aggregate level, provide a baseline of the state of affairs prior to the innovation. These same data for the period of the court’s operation should reflect a number of changes, such as reduction in numbers, as jurisdiction was transferred to the community court. These analyses will require computerized aggregate data from the judicial system reflecting the processing and disposition of nuisance cases. They will provide a frame of reference against which community court processing of cases can be compared. Thus, not only can we determine whether the shift of jurisdiction from the larger court system has occurred, but also contrast the disposition of the normal court system cases with community court dispositions, again on an aggregate

level. This analysis will also demonstrate whether the community court caseload is principally a shift of cases from other courts or created by the new emphasis on neighborhood crime and police response that previously had not existed.

4. Reaching the Targeted Population

Another important implementation question is “How well has the community court enrolled target population cases into its process?” One would assess the impact of a community court that enrolls only a small proportion of its targeted caseload of nuisance offenders (and produces great results) differently from one that reaches upward of 80 or 90 percent of its target population. A community court that misses most of its target population cannot have much impact, no matter how well it is run. Using police call-for-service, arrest, or summons data, or judicial system data to represent the target cases that should or could potentially be handled by the community court, aggregate and case-specific data from the Hartford Community Court can be employed to estimate how effectively the court reaches its intended population. The same analysis will provide feedback on the effectiveness of particular aspects of the model as implemented that may account for its relative effectiveness in reaching its target. This analysis

can also provide neighborhood-by-neighborhood results, assuming the data include location information.

5. Flow Analysis of the Hartford Community Court Process

Having placed the Hartford Community Court in context (of neighborhood crime problems, of police practices, and of the larger court caseload) in the data collection and analyses tasks 1 to 4 above, the evaluation should next examine the cases entering the community court throughout its operation and their dispositions. The focus of this analysis—which can be carried out with aggregate and individual case-level data—is to consider the nature and volume of cases reaching the court and the manner in which they are processed to conclusion. In a sense, the data for this task (all cases from the first day of the court’s operation forward) will be employed to map the court’s process and identify issues raised by the findings. Thus, flow analysis will follow cases from arrest to each event that occurs in the community court. On an aggregate level, the analysis will determine the numbers and kinds of dispositions associated with all cases entering the court, needs identified, services provided, and any other outcomes available in court data.

6. Services Delivered by the Hartford Community Court

An important feature of the community court strategy involves identifying problems that persons facing charges may have (e.g., physical and mental health disorders, substance abuse, poor education, unemployment, lack of housing, and need for public assistance.) and providing them access to needed services. Evaluation of implementation issues will also include analysis of aggregate data from the community court on the numbers and kinds of needs for assistance identified in the screening process and the relative use of services (and referrals made) during the first 10,000 cases. These data will be useful for two reasons. First, they will provide information to the court showing how the actual needs of persons processed in the program compared to those anticipated during the planning stages. Second, they will provide data for estimating the costs of resources involved in the delivery of services to court participants. (Many are not new resource costs, but rather resources made more accessible to participants through the community court mechanism.)

7. Analysis of (Average Daily) Community Court Workload

The final implementation emphasis of the proposed evaluation plan

answers the question “What does the community court do on an average day?” This analysis seeks to describe the average community court day in the aggregate over time in two ways: by looking at all activities on a typical day and by studying the court’s daily docket over time. Thus, this task requires aggregate data listing all events and transactions reflecting “business done” that are recorded in the organization on a given day as well as all dockets of the courtroom showing numbers and types of matters set and their dispositions. These two measures of daily workload—community court organization and community court courtroom—can be tracked over time. Analysis will focus on changes in the substance of these workload measures over time, which will reflect changes in the target population and in the way the court operates. The analysis may reveal, for example, greater numbers of cases involving homeless or mentally ill persons, and may raise issues for the court about how to meet the new challenges. Analysis of matters organized by neighborhood may show changes or raise issues reflecting changing conditions in particular areas, and may provide useful information in attending to the distinct needs of the different neighborhoods. These changes can then be discussed in light of the court’s original aims and any resource implications.

Assessing the Early-Stage Impact of the Hartford Community Court: Descriptive and Comparative Analysis

Against this background of implementation analysis, the evaluation plan proposes selective assessment of early outcome measures. We refer to early-stage outcomes to emphasize the relative youth of the Hartford Community Court and the different expectations associated with younger compared to more established programs. These proposed measures presuppose an appropriate comparative framework.

Assuming that the Hartford Community Court model was perfectly implemented, observers of the innovation would still want to know how well it works. That question implies a comparative analysis, contrasting the outcomes produced by the court to those that would have occurred without the innovation. The most rigorous way to frame such an analysis is to design implementation of the court in advance to include random assignment of some members of the target population to “traditional” processing, while the remainder would be handled through the community court.

Under this approach, evaluation of outcomes compares results for the two groups of similar cases processed during the same time period. The differences in outcomes

would support or fail to support the hypothesis that the community court leads to improvements in agreed-upon areas. With the innovation already in operation for 2 years, the evaluation approach must look back over the initial period of operation and construct an after-the-fact comparison that permits fair analysis of the impact of the community court in light of what would have occurred without it.

Although we would recommend an experimental design as being the most informative way to form the necessary comparison, the retrospective nature of this evaluation precludes such an approach in the Hartford setting. Construction of an appropriate comparison group is made more difficult because the implementation of the court, according to its design, may have caused most of the targeted cases (arrests or summonses) to go through the community court, leaving no target category cases left to serve as a natural comparison group. The evaluation plan will, then, necessarily be required to address questions of impact using other comparative strategies, such as contrasting the approach to target offenses before and during the operation of the Hartford Community Court, that will be less rigorous but still informative. The choice of a final comparative framework will be made in consultation with the Hartford Community Court leaders (table 2b.)

Table 2b

Evaluation of the Hartford Community Court: Summary of Proposed Sampling and Data Collection Strategies: Outcomes

OUTCOME ORIENTED			
Evaluation Focus	Data/Sample	Source	Research Purpose
8. Analysis of participant outcomes over 2 years.	Random samples of participants entering court representing different periods.	Community court data, criminal history data, social services data. Selective interviews, focus groups with participants.	More indepth description of individuals entering and passing through community court, court dispositions. Community service performance. Reoffending data over short followup. Social services data, if available. Prediction of outcomes. Participant feedback through exit survey, interviews, or focus groups.
9. Analysis of participants outcomes based on neighborhoods of arrest and residence.	Same as above.	Same as above.	Analysis of participant data from the perspective of neighborhoods. Arrests of residents/ locations of residence versus arrest. Dispositions/community service completed by neighborhood.
10. Analysis of community service delivery and impact on neighborhoods.	Community court data for all community service given, type of work, numbers of persons, by location/neighborhoods.	From community court, supplemented by observation of sites, photos of work done.	Looking at volume, use, location, and nature of community service produced from the perspective of neighborhoods in context of crime trends and community court arrests.
11. Perception of community court within neighborhoods served.	Survey (a costly option) or focus groups.	Neighborhood residents or organizations.	Focus groups representing neighborhoods served directed at perceptions of community court and its utility and impact.

8. Analysis of Participant Outcomes During the First 2 Years of Court Operation

Most of the evaluation tasks outlined so far have involved collection and analysis of overall or aggregate-level data. Because the Hartford Community Court approach seeks to make differences with individual offenders and through them have impacts in specific neighborhoods, this analysis focuses on samples of individual cases and the offenders involved. We would propose to draw samples of incoming cases from several periods during the operation of the court (or stratify a sample of participants on the basis of time period). The purpose would be to study cohorts of persons whose cases entered the court during different periods to describe them, their backgrounds, their cases, their apparent needs as reflected in screening interviews, the disposition of their cases, the services delivered, the sanctions imposed, and reoffending during some short followup period. (We propose a sample of about 500 to 600 cases drawn from periods between November 1998 and August 2000, with 6-month followups.)

Data collection will be more in-depth and resource intensive for this analysis, involving both computer-generated and manually assembled and coded records relating to demographics, residential history, location of residence and offense, criminal history, location of

prior arrests, prior treatment, substance abuse and health histories, and charged offenses. In addition, data collection will track the need for services identified in the intake process, the disposition of the case, the performance of community service or any other sanction assigned, and whether referrals to treatment or services of any sort were made and followed through by the participant.

The 6-month followup would chart whether persons were rearrested and the location of their rearrest, whether they returned to community court, and whether they used services to which they had been referred. The followup would track any other changes in status relevant to the original community court matter and assessment of needs. Data collection would require access to criminal history, community court screening, case disposition, and, to the extent possible, records of relevant service-providing agencies. (All data would be treated confidentially according to protocols acceptable to all participating agencies and usual research practice, so that no individual could be identified in the data.)

Assuming we have identified an appropriate comparison group with which to contrast the community court participants, analysis would look in depth at the backgrounds and problems of persons processed by the court, examine how they and their cases were treated, and describe their experiences during the

next 6 months. The community court model would at least presume that community court participants would receive more services, perform more community service sanctions, link voluntarily with referred services, and return to the justice system less frequently than their noncommunity court counterparts.²⁹

The experience of individuals participating in the community court also can be partly captured through agency exit interviews, interviews with samples of participants (all entering, not just those completing) and/or focus groups of participants, depending on resource availability.

9. Analysis of Participant Outcomes by Neighborhood of Residence and Offense

The data collected for the analysis of offender outcomes can be used to examine the impact of the community court on specific neighborhoods. Geographic analysis of the location of offender residences and the locations of the crimes with which they were charged can provide estimates of the court's impact in several ways. First, the research can look at the contributions of different neighborhoods to the court's caseload, by type of offense, to measure the extent to which the court is dealing with nuisance offenses in various geographic areas. Second, it can look at the geographic distribution of court participants and other community

members who receive services from the court (bearing in mind that defendants do not necessarily commit their offenses in the neighborhoods where they reside). To the extent that these individuals receive services that may improve their lives and social functioning, the court can have an impact on neighborhoods. Finally, the research can look at the geographic distribution of community service projects as a measure of the court's impact on neighborhoods.

10. Analysis of Community Service Delivery to Neighborhoods

The use of community service should be an important focus of the Hartford Community Court because of the impact it can have on both offenders and neighborhoods. The aggregate community court data described above under evaluation tasks 5 and 6 can be used to show the distribution of community service. Community court records can be used to show the kinds and distribution of community service over time and how neighborhood needs have been taken into consideration. These analyses can be examined in more depth using the individual data sets described in task 8. In addition, observation of work sites in the neighborhoods, as well as photographic documentation, can add depth to the analysis and assessment of the use of community service by the court.

11. Perception of the Hartford Community Court Within the Neighborhoods

Ideally—but impractically—it would be very helpful to survey the residents of each of the neighborhoods over time to determine whether they are familiar with the court and its work and how they believe it may have affected quality of life in their areas. Without the

resources to collect such resident attitude survey data, it may be informative to conduct focus groups in the principal neighborhoods to tap the feedback and opinions of residents in a less costly way. In fact, this may be one of the easiest ways to gather timely feedback on residents' perceptions of the court and its impact on specific locations.

VI. Conclusion

This report has sought to describe the Hartford Community Court as an important adaptation of the original Midtown prototype with distinct features—particularly its linkage with 17 distinct neighborhoods. The evaluation plan seeks to focus on some of the critical elements of the Hartford model as it has been tailored to address local needs and quality-of-life problems. We outline a range of implementation and impact-oriented questions and related data tasks that could provide a sound assessment of the court, reflecting its initial stages of development and operation.

This monograph is offered for the purposes of discussion and comment. Clearly, a number of questions concerning emphasis, method, and data can only be answered by those most involved with the operation of the court.

Although the evaluation plan outlined in this paper was specifically designed for the Hartford Community Court, it was developed with the broader purpose of providing a model for the evaluation of community court programs that will be applicable to such initiatives nationwide.

VII. Notes

1. The Midtown Community Court, now in its seventh year of operation, was initially planned as a 3-year demonstration project. Its early and widely publicized success rapidly made it a model for jurisdictions both across the United States and abroad that were experiencing similar problems with quality-of-life crimes and a similar disconnect between the traditional justice system and the public it was intended to serve. The Center for Court Innovation, an entity originally created to coordinate the planning and implementation of the Midtown court and several other New York area experimental courts for the state court system and the Fund for the City of New York, was led by the response to assist other jurisdictions in developing similar approaches. See www.communitycourts.org; *The Midtown Community Court Experiment: A Progress Report*, Center for Court Innovation (n.d.); Doris Weiland, John S. Goldkamp, and Mark Collins, *Facilitating Innovation in Community Justice: The Role of the Center for Court Innovation in the Community Court Movement*, Crime and Justice Research Institute (1999).

2. See John Feinblatt and Greg Berman, *Community Courts: A Manual of Principles*, Center for Court Innovation and Bureau of Justice Assistance (n.d.); *Responding to the Community: Principles for Planning and Creating a Community Court*, Bureau of Justice

Assistance (2001); Michelle Sviridoff, Richard Curtis, David Rottman, and Brian Ostrom, *Dispensing Justice Locally: The Implementation and Effects of the Midtown Community Court*, New York: Gordon and Breach Publishing Group (2000); Doris Weiland, John S. Goldkamp, and Mark Collins, *Facilitating Innovation in Community Justice: The Role of the Center for Court Innovation in the Community Court Movement*, Crime and Justice Research Institute (1999).

3. James Q. Wilson and George Kelling, "Broken Windows," *The Atlantic Monthly* (March):29–38 (1982).

4. U.S.C. 18(1):96 (October 15, 1970).

5. *Hartford Courant*, "Community Court Passes Senate: Hartford Would Establish First of Its Kind in the State," p. A6, June 1, 1997, statewide edition.

6. *Hartford Courant*, "City Council Favors Establishment of Community Court," p. B1, October 15, 1997, edition 7 Hartford North Final.

7. John S. Goldkamp, presentation at Practitioners Institute: *Community Court Coordinators Report on the State of the Art*, Austin, Texas, February 29, 2000.

8. *Hartford Courant*, "Opening Date for State's First Community Court

Pushed to January,” p. B4, July 8, 1997, edition 7 Hartford North Final.

9. *Hartford Courant*, “Jury Still Out on Court’s Opening: Delays Anger Neighborhood Activists,” p. B1, May 13, 1998, edition 7 Hartford North Final.

10. *Hartford Courant*, “Killings Serve as Rallying Point,” p. B4, December 5, 1997, edition 7 Hartford North Final.

11. Judge Raymond Norko, interviewed on May 24, 2000.

12. These figures reflect court business prior to a recent marked reduction in arrests, both community court and otherwise. On the day the authors visited the court, May 24, 2000, there were only eight arraignments.

13. State statutory crimes heard by the court include breach of peace (53a-181), larceny (53a-125b), simple possession of marijuana (21a-279 (c)), interference (no injury to the officer) (53a-167a), prostitution (53a-82), solicitation (53a-83), disorderly conduct (53a-182), threatening (53a-62), criminal trespass (53a-109), and criminal mischief (53a-117). City of Hartford ordinance violations heard include public nuisance (24-2), loitering (25-8), public drinking (4-3), and excessive noise (23-1).

14. One of the few problems with the court facility that both Rae Ann Palmer and Judge Norko mentioned was the inadequacy of the lockup space for the numbers of in-custody defendants that the court receives.

15. According to Chief Court Administrator Aaron Ment (*Hartford Courant*, “All Community Court Needs Now Is a Home,” p. B1, November 19, 1997, edition 7 Hartford North Final).

16. *Hartford Courant*, “Jury Still Out on Court’s Opening: Delays Anger Neighborhood Activists,” p. B1, May 13, 1998, edition 7 Hartford North Final.

17. The MIS is a Microsoft Access®-based system. The innovation earned the designer Second Place in the Microsoft Windows World Open (April 1999) in the Justice/Public Safety category. Variations of this program are being implemented in the Waterbury Community Court in Connecticut and in other courts across the United States.

18. *Hartford Community Court Newsletter*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1998.

19. Chris Pleasanton provided through the www.courtbuilders.org listserv on July 5, 2000. The testing is permitted by and governed under C.G.S. Sec. 54-102a, which allows the court to mandate STD and/or HIV testing of defendants charged with sexually related offenses. The court has not

mandated HIV testing to date, although it is available through the STD Testing Protocol on a voluntary basis.

20. *Hartford Community Court Newsletter*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1998.

21. Judge Raymond Norko, interviewed on May 24, 2000.

22. "Evaluation of Essays," Amariliz Gonzalez, Hartford Community Court Intern, (University of Connecticut (August 2000).

23. City of Hartford Ordinances Sec. 23 1-5, paragraph 23-5, assigns jurisdiction in violations of this ordinance to the community court.

24. This description of mental health services comes from information provided through the www.court-builders.org listserv by Sally Cadmus, DMHAS, March 27, 2000.

25. Editorial by Don Noel, *Hartford Courant*, "Community Policing, Community Court Go Hand in Hand," p. A25, February 7, 1997, statewide edition.

26. These views were expressed to the authors at a meeting of the Sanctions Committee in May 2000.

27. Center for Court Innovation, *Hartford Community Court*. Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, DC: p.4.

28. From July 21 to August 20, 2000, enforcement by the Community Response Division citywide resulted in 120 arrests/summons for alcohol violations, 145 for loitering/breach of peace, 96 for excessive noise, and 10 for disorderly conduct/prostitution.

29. Although court officials view reduction of recidivism as an important goal, in the short term defendants with serious behavioral, health, and social problems are expected to have multiple contacts with the court before interventions affect their lives and behavior. The court views a certain degree of recidivism under these circumstances as affording additional opportunities to provide needed social services. Recidivism can serve as a useful measure of impact if analyzed thoughtfully and controlling for various factors having to do with defendant characteristics. We might expect to see a reduction in rearrests for individuals committing offenses they did not know were illegal and for whom a single episode of community service can be a deterrent. We might see the impact of community court in terms of reduction in return visits and perhaps longer times to rearrest for seriously troubled individuals who need repeated social services intervention. And we might be able to identify individuals whose primary problem is habitual criminal behavior and on whom the benefits of the community court experience may be lost.

VIII. For More Information

Please use the contact information below to learn more about the programs discussed in this monograph.

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For additional information on BJA grants and programs, contact:

Bureau of Justice Assistance

810 Seventh Street NW.
Washington, DC 20531
202-616-6500
Fax: 202-305-1367
World Wide Web:
www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA

Bureau of Justice Assistance Clearinghouse

P.O. Box 6000
Rockville, MD 20849-6000
1-800-688-4252
World Wide Web: www.ncjrs.org

Clearinghouse staff are available Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. eastern time. Ask to be placed on the BJA mailing list.

U.S. Department of Justice Response Center

1-800-421-6770 or 202-307-1480

Response Center staff are available Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. eastern time.

Bureau of Justice Assistance Information

General Information

Callers may contact the U.S. Department of Justice Response Center for general information or specific needs, such as assistance in submitting grant applications and information about training. To contact the Response Center, call 1-800-421-6770 or write to 1100 Vermont Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20005.

Indepth Information

For more indepth information about BJA, its programs, and its funding opportunities, requesters can call the BJA Clearinghouse. The BJA Clearinghouse, a component of the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS), shares BJA program information with state and local agencies and community groups across the country. Information specialists are available to provide reference and referral services, publication distribution, participation and support for conferences, and other networking and outreach activities. The Clearinghouse can be reached by

- Mail**
P.O. Box 6000
Rockville, MD 20849-6000
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2277 Research Boulevard
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- E-mail**
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In the body of the message,
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