

FACT SHEET: De Blasio Administration, Public Officials Highlight Series of Evidence-Backed Reforms to Reduce Recidivism Among Young Adults

New York City to become one of the first jurisdictions in the country to end punitive segregation for 18- to 21-year-olds

Today's announcement builds off of the work the state courts have been doing to divert young adults under the leadership of Chief Judge Lippman

“Spending time behind bars at a young age can have a profound impact on whether someone returns to jail in the years to come. Today, I am pleased to announce that leaders and policy makers across the city are coming together to make sure justice-involved young New Yorkers are provided with alternatives to jail time when appropriate and given the mentoring, education, and treatment they need to lead a brighter, more productive future.” –Mayor de Blasio

NEW YORK -- Mayor de Blasio today announced a package of reforms that better address the unique developmental needs of justice-involved young adults in New York City. Implemented in partnership with the courts, the district attorneys, the NYPD and the City Departments of Probation and Correction, this announcement advances the Administration’s commitment to drive down unnecessary incarceration and prevent future crime by reducing recidivism among young adults (ages 16 to 24).

These reforms are rooted in recent research showing that:

- Nationwide, [young adults under 24 have the highest recidivism of any age group, according to a Bureau of Justice Statistics report from 2014.](#)
- Targeted interventions appropriate for young adults have been shown to make a positive and lasting impact. [For example, a Massachusetts program offering programs and services to young men at high risk of re-offense showed a 65% reduction in recidivism and a 100% increase in employment when compared with a similar population.](#)
- Involvement with the criminal justice system can have a lasting, negative impact on young adults. [For example, 70% of males aged 18-24 have attained at least a high school diploma or GED. Among incarcerated men of the same age, less than 20% have attained at least a high school diploma.](#)

The State Court System, the five district attorneys' offices, the NYPD, the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, and the Departments of Probation and Correction are all in the process of piloting or rolling out expanded programming to improve how the City handles justice-involved young people. These programs range from eliminating punitive segregation for people under 21 to connecting young people with treatment and support instead of criminal convictions for drug and prostitution offenses. Many of these programs have already shown promising results.

The programs include:

Ending Punitive Segregation and Improving Young Adult Housing on Rikers Island

In December 2014, the Department of Correction ended the practice of punitive segregation for 16- and 17-year-olds in their custody and will end punitive segregation for 18-to-21 year olds by the end of 2015—making DOC one of the first corrections system in the country to end punitive segregation for this young adult population. By the end of 2015, DOC will have plans in place to separately house young adults, ages 18 to 21, in housing designed to meet the unique developmental needs of the 1,200 young adults currently being held in their custody.

- This housing area will promote good behavior through a positive behavioral program. A wide array of programming will substantially occupy young adults daily.
- All staff working in this housing area will receive specialized training including improved communication, motivational interviewing, and conflict mediation.
- The DOC will also redesign the units that house young adults in a manner that will make the housing more conducive to positive programming.

Rapid Interventions to Avoid a Criminal Record: Project Reset

Through a partnership between the Manhattan District Attorney, Brooklyn District Attorney, and the New York Police Department, Project Reset refers first time low-level offenders ages 16 and 17 to brief and rapidly applied youth court and counseling programs run by the Center for Court Innovation.

- Project Reset launched in February 2015 in the 25th precinct in Harlem and the 73rd precinct in Brownsville. 16- and 17-year-olds charged with nonviolent misdemeanors are considered eligible for Project Reset, and decide whether they want to enroll.
- Participants must attend two after-school sessions at the Harlem or Brownsville Community Justice Center. Upon completion, participants' arrest records are sealed and no charges are brought against them, resulting in no criminal record.
- Project Reset was expanded in May 2015 to also include the 23rd and 28th precincts in Harlem, the 75th precinct in East New York, and the 77th precinct in Crown Heights. To date, the program has served about 35 individuals in the two boroughs.

Diverting Adolescents to Programs and Services

Launched by Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman in 2012 in nine counties throughout New York State, including all five boroughs of New York City, the Court System's Adolescent Diversion Parts use an age-appropriate approach to 16- and 17-year-olds charged with misdemeanors in the adult criminal court system. In 2014, OCA expanded the ADP's age range to serve court involved youth up to age 24 in three Brooklyn precincts.

- The program enrolled 4,401 participants over the first 18 months of implementation. Young offenders accused of a misdemeanor are diverted to a service provider in lieu of prosecution and are able to obtain a non-criminal disposition, which allows them to avoid having a permanent criminal record.
- Led to a significant decrease in re-arrest amongst high-risk defendants when compared to high-risk defendants who did not participate in ADP. Also led to a 7% reduction in felony re-arrests in the Bronx and 13% reduction in felony re-arrests in Queens.
- Based on this success, OCA expanded the ADP's age range to serve court-involved youth up to age 24 in three Brooklyn precincts.

Supportive Programming to Avoid Criminal Convictions: DAT-Y

The Criminal Court of New York City's Desk Appearance Ticket - Youth (DAT-Y) program is an intervention method to divert 16- and 17-year-olds from further exposure to the criminal justice system, while ensuring that they are not stigmatized by the criminal charges associated with the Desk Appearance Ticket. A small pilot was launched in September 2012, which ultimately expanded throughout Kings County in mid-2014.

- In a Kings County pilot, program participants have cases resolved within a week. Participants appear before the judge, are assigned to a program, and, upon completion of the program to which they are assigned, have their cases dismissed. Programs include sessions on self-esteem, consequential decision making, and an educational component for those behind in school.
- An evaluation of the most recent phase of DAT-Y found that 84% of participants had not been re-arrested within six months of completion — out of 164 participants, 138 of them did not re-offend.
- In the fall of 2015, the DAT-Y program will expand to the Bronx. Participants will appear before a judge, complete assigned programming, and have cases dismissed all on the same day. Plans are being formulated to continue DAT-Y in Kings County; citywide expansion is under consideration.

Mentoring and Job Preparation for Young People on Probation

The Department of Probation has launched a number of initiatives that specifically address the needs of probation clients ages 16 to 24. By partnering with nonprofits and community-based

organizations, DOP is connecting youth to mentoring, educational and civic engagement experiences, and job preparation.

- Launched in 2011 as part of the Young Men's Initiative, **Arches** is a group mentoring intervention that helps probation clients ages 16 to 24 transform the attitudes and behaviors that have led to criminal activity. As part of the Mayor's Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety, DOP launched **Next STEPS** in 2014, which is modeled after Arches and specifically targets NYCHA residents ages 16 to 24.
- **Justice Plus**, launched in January 2012, is a flexible wrap-around, designed to support Cure Violence participants ages 16 to 30. Justice Plus emphasizes work readiness opportunities that link to trades/vocations and soft workplace skills through community benefit projects, internships, and other opportunities. The program expanded beginning in July 2014 from 5 sites to 18 sites.
- The **Justice Community Program**, which launched in January 2012, engages youths in educational, work, team, and civic engagement experiences through community benefit projects to improve neighborhoods.
- **Justice Scholars**, which launched in January 2012, is a program that uses mentoring, educational support, and career services to generate educational gains and features multiple tracks for different age and education levels.

To begin implementing these reforms, over a hundred city leaders who spearheaded these efforts will convene this week at a conference on young adults in the criminal justice system hosted by the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice and John Jay College of Criminal Justice. To view the webcast of the event, check the John Jay website at <http://johnjayrec.nyc/2015forum/>.

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