

# Planning a Community Court

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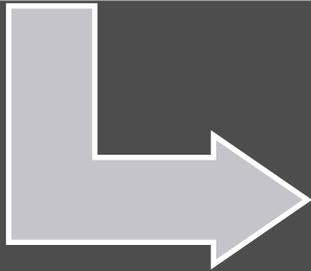
# Community Courts Today

- **Approximately 40 US projects in operation**
- **Internationally: England, South Africa , Australia, Canada, Singapore**
- **Several community courts in planning (ex: Washington DC citywide expansion project)**

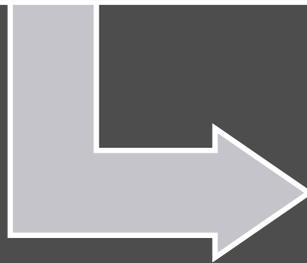
**Good Results come from  
Good Planning**

# PLANNING STAGES

**NEEDS  
ASSESSMENT**



**PROGRAM  
DESIGN/  
CONCEPT PAPER**



**IMPLEMENTATION  
PLANNING**

# What is a “Needs Assessment”?

**Learning about your  
community by asking the  
right questions and  
collecting the right data.**

# Why do a “Needs Assessment”?

- Clarify the problem to be addressed
- Outreach to community members
- Build stakeholder support
- Bridge the gulf between the justice system and those it serves
- Collect baseline data on the project for evaluation purposes

# How does it work?

- Convene stakeholder advisory committee
- Collect data and synthesize information
- Conduct interviews with stakeholders
- Conduct focus groups
- Conduct community surveys
- Attend community meetings and convene “town hall” forum
- Complete needs assessment report

# Stakeholder Interviews

- **Key community + “system” stakeholders**
- **Individual meetings**
- **Three reasons:**
  - 1) identify problems, priorities, strengths**
  - 2) build support and relationships**
  - 3) collect baseline information**



# Neighborhood Meetings

- Use existing neighborhood infrastructure
- “Listening tour”
- Make short (5 – 10 minutes) presentation about community court and why you’re there



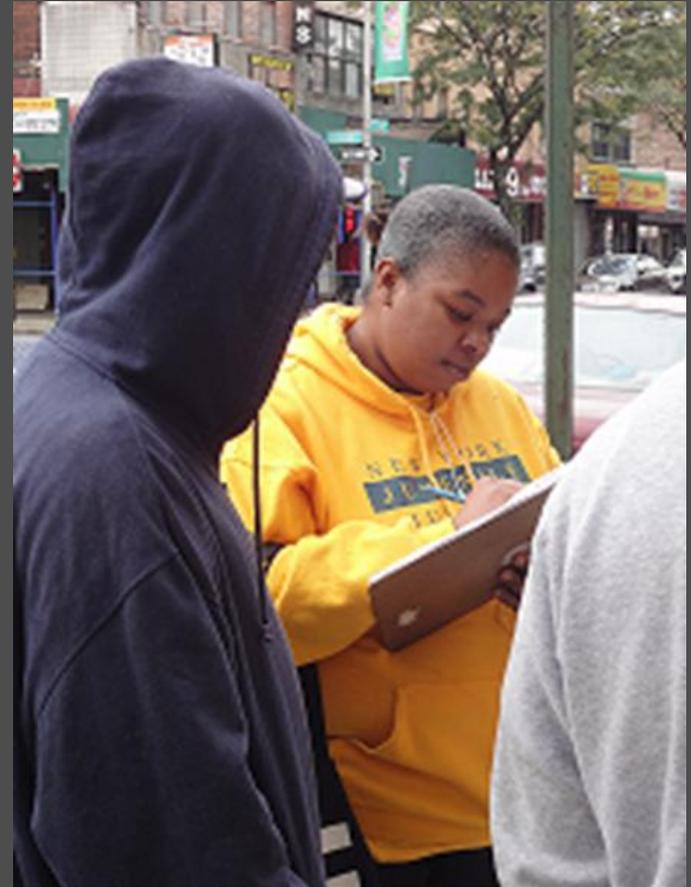
# Focus Groups

- People not in leadership positions
- Ex: Parents, youth, property owners or renters, elderly, etc
- Same kinds of questions as interviews with key stakeholders, but ability to probe deeper



# Community Surveys

- Opportunity to learn about community perceptions of crime
- Short introduction to community courts



# Steering Committee

- **Key “inside” stakeholders: court, prosecutors, defense, police, probation, etc.**
- **Frequent meetings to identify tasks, assign responsibilities, monitor progress and make decisions**
- **Getting the justice system to act like a real “system”**

# Community Advisory Board

- **Justice system, government partners, service providers, residential, faith, business communities**
- **Regular meetings (for example, every 3 months)**
- **Discuss community problems, progress to date, collect new information and brainstorm new responses**



# Data Collection

- Data should be used to define problems and set goals
- Data enables planners to understand:
  - *Demographics (neighborhood, offender, etc.)*
  - *Scope of the problem (types of crime, crime hot spots, unemployment, public health concerns, etc.)*
  - *Court processes (case flow, case dispositions, etc.)*

# Data Collection and Analysis

- Data is available from an array of sources
- Prioritize based on the planning timeline and available resources



# Program Design/ Concept Paper

Using findings from the needs assessment the concept paper, answers why the proposed project is necessary, how it intends to solve neighborhood problems, and what resources it will need to do so.

# What does the concept paper include?

- Project goals
- Specific and quantifiable objectives to describe what will need to change for your project to meet its goals
- Description of the approach your project is testing
- Core staff that are essential to realize your project goals (e.g., project director, assessment and case management staff, etc.)

# The Concept Paper Cont.

- Identify roles the community will play in the project
- Identify potential partnerships with local agencies
- Project Budget
- Marketing plan (funders, government partners)

# Implementation Planning

## Bringing Your Project to Fruition



Austin, TX



Milliken, CO



Brooklyn, NY

# Implementation Planning

- Linking defendants to social services
- Community service protocol
- Responsibility for implementation / Staffing
- Training
- Information technology (sharing information about defendants)
- Screening/Assessments
- Evaluation

# Milliken Community Court

Milliken, Colorado



# MILLIKEN COMMUNITY COURT Needs Assessment

- Create focused planning team with key players
- Engage CCI early
- Bring capable evaluation team on early: data, data, data



# MILLIKEN COMMUNITY COURT Concept Paper

- Engage team members and retain consultant to write Concept Paper
- Process mapping - painful
- Don't reinvent the wheel – use existing resources (CCI, community courts)
- Lawyer/legal challenge



# MILLIKEN COMMUNITY COURT Implementation



- Police engagement, support & understanding is crucial – gateway to caseload
- Don't reinvent resources – leverage what exists & add value for other players
- Community Justice Council to include key stakeholders and political support
- CCI visits/presentations → community credibility

# MILLIKEN COMMUNITY COURT Community Justice Council

- Community Justice Council that will champion the project with members who get value added from day one: school counselors, Boys & Girls Club, School Resource Off., etc.
- Identify additional resources/partners – including non-traditional court partners (faith-based, mentoring, recreation, defense bar etc.) & Community Service options



# Additional Lessons Learned

- Value of CCI Conferences/training and site visits
- Value of BJA Funding – Byrne \$
  - Colo. Div. of Criminal Justice grant

# Results: Innovative Approaches

- Conference with assault victim's family to discuss anti-violence initiative
- CJC lead community conversation about kids & guns & alcohol after fatal self-inflicted accidental shooting of 19 yr. old with stolen .45
- Funding Milliken Middle School Anti-violence program



# Results: “Free Angel” – truancy prosecution



# Community Police – Community Court collaboration



# Milliken Police Station & Community Court Lobby

- Resource Center
- United Way 211 Access
- Bilingual Assistance



# MILLIKEN POLICE STATION & COMMUNITY COURT Kids & Cops Park



- CCI Technical Assistance Services
- Mentor Courts
- Suggested Reading

- Avoiding Failures of Implementation  
<http://www.courtinnovation.org/uploads/documents/Failure%20Final.pdf>
- Engaging Stakeholders in Your Project  
[http://www.courtinnovation.org/uploads/documents/Engaging\\_Stakeholders\\_in\\_Your\\_Project%5B1%5D.pdf](http://www.courtinnovation.org/uploads/documents/Engaging_Stakeholders_in_Your_Project%5B1%5D.pdf)
- Engaging the Community  
<http://www.courtinnovation.org/uploads/documents/Engaging%20the%20Community.pdf>
- Principles of Community Justice  
<http://www.courtinnovation.org/uploads/documents/Communitycourtprinciples.pdf>
- Red Hook Diary: Planning a Community Court  
<http://www.courtinnovation.org/uploads/documents/Red%20Hook%20Diary.pdf>
- Using Data to Build Your Program  
[http://www.courtinnovation.org/uploads/documents/Using\\_Data\\_to\\_Build\\_Your\\_Program%5B1%5D.pdf](http://www.courtinnovation.org/uploads/documents/Using_Data_to_Build_Your_Program%5B1%5D.pdf)

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HOME WHO WE ARE WHAT WE DO NEWS DONATE CONTACT

**JUMP BY TOPIC**

- Community Court
- Community Prosecution
- Domestic Violence
- Drug Court
- Families and Children
- Juvenile Justice
- Mediation
- Mental Health
- Problem-Solving Justice
- Procedural Justice
- Reentry
- Sex Offending
- Technology
- Trial and Error
- Tribal Justice

**LATEST NEWS**

**A New Newark: Rekindling Hope with New Community Courts**  
This article from the ABA Journal profiles Newark's first problem-solving court, Newark Community Solutions.

**15 Years of Justice Reform**  
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**Do drug courts work?**  
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**What can failure teach us about criminal justice reform?**  
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**DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS**

