Superior Court of California
County of Orange
News Release

September 30, 2014

Orange County Community Court Selected as a National Mentor Site

Santa Ana, CA – The Orange County Community Court is one of four sites selected by the Center for Court Innovation, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance, to serve as a mentor for other courts around the nation. As a mentor court, the Orange County Community Court will encourage other jurisdictions to engage with local residents and create meaningful alternatives to incarceration for criminal offenders. The other mentor sites are Dallas, TX, Hartford, CT, and San Francisco, CA.

Community courts emphasize alternative responses to incarceration by linking offenders to drug treatment, mental health services, job training, and other services to help them address the underlying issues that often fuel criminal behavior. Community courts place special emphasis on treating individual offenders with dignity and respect. Research has shown that this commitment to "procedural justice" can reduce crime, improve compliance with court orders, and enhance public trust in the justice system.

The Orange County Community Court will serve as a national resource, helping courts around the country to enhance procedural justice and promote the use of alternatives to jail when appropriate. "The mentor courts will encourage courts around the country to rethink the standard approach to crime," said Kim Ball, senior policy advisor at the Bureau of Justice Assistance in Washington, DC.

The Center for Court Innovation collaborated with the Bureau of Justice Assistance in the selection of the courts and will administer the mentor court program. The Center for Court Innovation is a non-profit organization with more than 20 years of experience in planning and implementing community courts and providing technical assistance to justice innovators around the world.