

NEWS RELEASE

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RELEASE DATE:
March 10, 2011

COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTER CELEBRATES SUCCESSES ON 2-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

SAN FRANCISCO -- Presiding Judge Katherine Feinstein today praised the Community Justice Center (CJC) as an innovative criminal justice reform in San Francisco during a community event to celebrate its 2-year anniversary.

"In the past two years since we opened the CJC in the Tenderloin, Judicial Officers have heard the cases of more than 3,200 defendants," Judge Feinstein said during the Open House at the 555 Polk St. CJC Service Center. "During this time, more than 1,380 individuals have accessed services here. We are proud of the CJC's track record of helping people tackle the issues that lead to repeated involvement in the criminal justice system."

The CJC primarily handles non-violent felonies, misdemeanors and probation revocation cases for defendants arrested or cited in the Tenderloin, Civic Center, Union Square and SoMa neighborhoods of San Francisco. Known as a collaborative justice, or problem-solving court, CJC clients attend Court for judicial monitoring of their progress. After an initial assessment, a CJC participant follows an individualized treatment plan, all of which happens in the same building at 555-575 Polk St.

CJC clinicians have connected hundreds of clients to substance abuse treatment, mental health, housing, financial and physical health services.

Judge Feinstein emphasized that the state budget crisis may shift certain public safety costs to the counties. The Court's expertise in working closely with justice partners on collaborative justice programs such as the CJC will position San Francisco well to handle these

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increased public safety responsibilities – if the state provides the funding, she said.

“San Francisco can’t afford the cost of a criminal justice system that cycles people through the courts and prisons over and over again,” Judge Feinstein said.

The CJC’s budget is \$1.7 million. In addition, the launch and continued operations of the CJC have relied on \$3 million in federal grant money – all of which supports treatment costs.

“Our City needed to overhaul and improve the front-end of our justice system – and CJC is a major success,” said former San Francisco Supervisor Bevan Dufty. “In tough financial times, recycling individuals in the justice system is wasteful and takes a toll on neighborhoods and businesses alike. CJC reflects our City’s values – everyone deserves a meaningful chance at living a productive and healthy life.”

Here are some statistics since the Court opened the CJC in March 2009:

- On average, the CJC hears 75 cases per day, including several in-custody cases at the Hall of Justice;
- 20 percent of incoming CJC cases are felonies; 80 percent are misdemeanors;
- More than 90 percent of open felony cases at the CJC are drug-related. More than 40 percent of open misdemeanor cases are theft-related;
- The median time between misdemeanor citation and first appearance is five days, compared to the traditional processing time of 45 days at the Hall of Justice;
- The appearance rate at the CJC is 74 percent;
- 70 percent of CJC clients are substance abusers;
- 36 percent are homeless; and
- 38 percent live in temporary situations or single-room occupancy housing.

The CJC is a collaboration of the San Francisco Superior Court, San Francisco Department of Public Health, Office of the District Attorney, Bar Association of San Francisco, Adult Probation Department, Human Services Agency and numerous other partners that seek to improve public safety and the lives of CJC clients.

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