

Restorative Justice Community Court - Avondale Dane County Site Visit. August 4, 2023, Cook County, IL

Participants:

Carlo Esqueda, Dane County Clerk of Courts

Supervisor Dana Pellebon, Dane County Board of Supervisors

Honorable Everett Mitchell, Branch 4-Dane County Circuit Court

Isabel Anadon, Dane County Office of Justice Reform and Equity

Kirbie Mack, JFMJ Leadership

Linda Ketcham, Just Dane

Sarah Jensen, Dane County Community Justice Council



RESTORATIVE JUSTICE COMMUNITY COURT- AVONDALE



TIMOTHY EVANS – CHIEF JUDGE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY

BEATRIZ SANTIAGO – PRESIDING JUDGE OF THE AVONDALE RJCC

JAMAL JACKSON – ASSISTANT STATE'S ATTORNEY

MELANIE NUBY – PUBLIC DEFENDER

MARGARET KULUJIAN – COURT COORDINATOR

ELIGIBILITY

- Must be 18 to 26 years old
 - Have been charged with a nonviolent felony or misdemeanor
 - Live, work, or worship in one of the neighborhoods which has a community court
 - Have a non-violent criminal history
 - Accept responsibility for the harm caused
- ❖ Note: victim must agree to participate in the process

WHAT IS REQUIRED OF THE RJCC PARTICIPANT?

- Be willing to accept responsibility for the harm caused
- Actively participate in all RJCC processes including pre-circle work and peace circle meetings
- Appear in the court meetings and meetings with case managers as scheduled
- Follow all of the requirements of the Repair of Harm Agreement
- Complete all of the requirements of the Repair of Harm Agreement created in the peace circle

DEFERRED PROSECUTION

- Allows offenders a chance to avoid a Felony Conviction
- Non-violent offenders only
- Victim must agree
- Misdemeanor & Felony offenders included
- Restitution must be fully repaid
- One time only offer
- Offer made anytime in criminal process pre-plea
- Charges are dismissed upon successful completion
- Expungeable

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND INVOLVEMENT

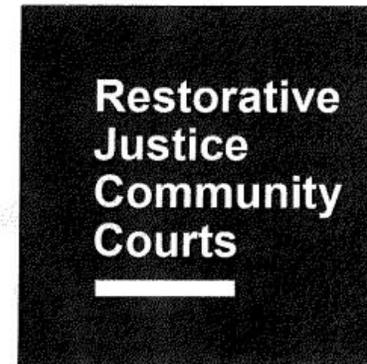
- Community events, meetings, and open houses
- Partnering with local elected officials, churches, organizations, community groups, neighborhood associations, chambers of commerce
- Being part of community events, church festivals, back to school fairs, and community meetings
- Cooperating with local social and family service organizations
- Inviting community members to the court and to RJCC peace circles

Between 2020 and 2022, more than 200 people were admitted to the restorative justice programs in Cook County, more than 80% on a weapons possession charge. The program admits what they call emerging adults from 18 to 26, working off studies that show that adults' brains do not fully develop until later into their 20s. It's meant to be an intervention — putting someone on a different path before it's too late. An internal study undertaken by the courts found that about 13% of participants who had been released from the program for at least a year were charged with a new offense, compared with about 65% in a peer control group of defendants with similar characteristics and charges. Of those, one restorative justice participant was charged with a violent offense, compared with seven in the control group, including one charged with murder, the study said. As of March, of the 218 participants admitted since 2020, about 3% were found guilty and about 43% had their charges dropped or dismissed. The rest were still pending.



A restorative justice courtroom in Chicago's Englewood neighborhood. The county opened its first community court in North Lawndale in 2017. (Antonio Perez/Chicago Tribune)

**State of Illinois
Circuit Court of Cook County**



**Restorative Justice
Community Court**
A Restorative Approach to Crime & Conflict

**Participant Handbook
Guidelines and Program Information**

Honorable Timothy C. Evans, Chief Judge

Dane County site visit to RJCC – Avondale August 4, 2023



Dane County site visit to RJCC – Avondale

August 4, 2023



RJCC – Peacemakers



Honorable Judge Evans addresses Dane County delegation

Dane County site visit to RJCC – Avondale August 4, 2023



Reflections & Testimonials.