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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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*Local Nonprofits Partner with Community Solutions to Support an Alternative Sentencing Model that Allows Offenders of Low Level Crimes to Give Back to the Community and Access Rehabilitative Services*

*Jersey City one of 10 Municipalities Nationwide to receive a Grant to Reform its Court System for Lower Level Crimes; the Program Transitions to Full Launch after a successful Pilot Phase*

**JERSEY CITY – Mayor Steven M. Fulop** announces the official full launch of Jersey City’s community court program, Jersey City Community Solutions (JCCS), after the completion of a successful pilot phase. This innovative program provides alternative sentences for low-level offenses in an effort to hold offenders accountable while reducing recidivism, aiding victims, and increasing public confidence in the justice system.

Like other community courts nationally, JCCS takes a problem-solving and community-focused approach. Eligible program participants undergo a needs assessment, attend recommended social services, and must engage in restorative community service projects which serve as meaningful sanctions for their offenses. Community service is performed at collaborating institutions and nonprofit organizations across the city including food pantries, senior care organizations, and the city’s own Department of Public Works, to name a few. In addition, more than a dozen social service organizations offer coordinated services to ensure offenders can get back on track. Since the program pilot began in October of 2017, 45% of participants have successfully completed the program, and current enrollees are actively working toward program completion. Program compliance is closely monitored by JCCS staff.

“By providing certain offenders with services instead of sentences, we’ll better tackle the underlying issues which contribute to criminal behavior such as drug or alcohol abuse,” said Mayor Fulop. “We’ve collaborated with our community residents to get their input to best address our goals.”

Under the new program, offenders are offered a variety of services to help with rehabilitation including drug treatment, job training, and TASC (formerly GED) classes. This restorative justice approach has been successfully applied in community courts across the country. The aim of bringing the program to Jersey City is to shift the focus of the justice system from moving people through the court as quickly as possible, to improving outcomes for the community and its residents, while meeting required case disposition standards.

One of JCCS’s first defendant-participants who successfully completed the program wished to remain anonymous, but had this to say about her experience: “JCCS is a program that helps you with problems. If you get into a situation where you don’t know the outcome of it, this gives you a choice. You can do some volunteer work and social work. They help you as long as you help yourself.”

Jersey City was one of 10 municipalities nationwide selected for a competitive \$200,000 U.S. Department of Justice grant in 2016 to develop and implement a community court program to reform its court system when dealing with lower-level crimes.

Over the past year, an advisory group comprised of court staff, police, community representatives, and the Mayor's Office provided input regarding the new community court program. The advisory board held several community forums open to the public to gather residents' input and feedback to help shape the program in a manner best suited to produce positive and productive outcomes in Jersey City. JCCS seeks to accomplish its goals by using visible community service sentences to send a message to the community that the justice system will address quality-of-life harm done by offenders.

Please see below for the lists of social service providers and community service partners helping to provide these opportunities to Jersey City residents. The list of partners is not exhaustive and JCCS is still seeking partnerships with organizations in an effort to serve the residents of our community. Interested organizations can email JCCS at [jccommunitysolutions@cnj.org](mailto:jccommunitysolutions@cnj.org) or call 201-209-6734.

### Community Service

Jersey City Department of Public Works  
The Sharing Place  
St John's Lutheran Church Food Pantry  
Let's Celebrate  
Garden State Episcopal CDC  
Grace Church Van Vorst  
Liberty Humane Society  
NAACP Chapter of Jersey City  
Hudson Pride Connection Center  
Angela Cares

### Social Service

<u>Organization:</u>	<u>Service Type:</u>
City of Jersey City, Health and Human Services	Health/Medical
City of Jersey City, Office of Veterans Affairs	Veterans
City of Jersey City, Office of Welcoming Communities	Immigration
Jersey City Employment and Training Program	Education/Job Training
Women Rising	Employment/Job Training, Family
C-Line Community Outreach Services	Addiction/Co-Occurring Treatment
Khaleidoscope Health Care, Inc.	Addiction/Co-Occurring Treatment
Covenant House	Youth Homelessness Services
Bridgeway Rehabilitation Services	Mental Health Treatment
Collaborative Support Programs of NJ	Mental Health-Drop In Center
Garden State Episcopal Community Development Corp.	Homelessness/Housing Resources
The Waterfront Project	Legal Advocacy
Northeast New Jersey Legal Services	Legal Advocacy
Urban League of Hudson County	Family Services
Hudson Pride Connection Center	LGBTQ Advocacy/Minority Health
Metropolitan Family Health Network, Inc.	Health/Medical
The Royal Men Foundation	Mentoring/Support Group

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