
Office of The Municipal Public Defender

Presentation to Safety, Housing, Education, &
Homelessness Committee, February 16, 2022

Client Support Team

Denver's Front Door to Procedural Justice

- Launched in February 2021 with a 3-year Justice Assistance Grant in partnership with Denver Human Services
- Awarded a 3-year Alternatives to Jail Caring for Denver Grant in September of 2022 to expand project
- **Goals:** Connect clients to resources, benefits, housing, reentry services, & behavioral health treatment; Improve Case outcomes; & Reduce Recidivism



Rica Rodriguez
Peer Navigator

Lupe Gonzalez
Bilingual Outreach Case Coordinator

LeAnn Fickes
Program Manager

Alice Norman
Chief Municipal Public Defender



Our Clients

75% are living with trauma, mental health, or substance misuse conditions

50% are experiencing homelessness & more are at-risk of losing housing

Highest users of safety services including jail beds, hospital, police, & fire [1]

Limited access to behavioral healthcare especially for clients of color [2]



Court Outcomes

- High recidivism and missed court appearances
- Many distrustful of the judicial system and services



How we Help our Clients

- **We provide** wraparound services, including case management, peer support and navigation, & behavioral health navigation
- **We connect** clients to community resources, housing and shelter & behavioral health treatment
- **We support** clients both in the community and in-custody by attending court and community meetings, checking-in, reentry planning, providing mitigation, and more
- **We collaborate** with City and community partners to coordinate and link clients to care and services
- **We educate** agency staff and attorneys by coordinating trainings

Year 1: 2021 Impact

Denver's Front Door to Procedural Justice

Recidivism

7% of participants received new Municipal charges after program referral

Court Appearances

Participants appeared for court **93%** of the time

Collaboration

Partnerships created with **20** programs/organizations



261 client referrals



1,500 + client outreaches



10 clients connected to housing
245 housing & shelter referrals



749 resource connections
117 behavioral health referrals



54 clients participated in peer support and navigation

*Recidivism and court appearance rates calculated from a sample of 66 participants

Participant Voices

“Rica, I wanted to send sincerest gratitude for all of the work you have done to help me get back on my feet! I have been accepted for Veteran’s Affairs Supportive Housing and I wouldn’t have known where to start when I got out of jail if you were not there to support me...The Client Support Team has made a huge impact on my well being as well as the well being of my family.”

“Thanks again for all your help with everything up to this point. I'm blessed to have you as a social worker. I never had one before.”



2022 & Beyond

Denver's Front Door to Procedural Justice

- Project expansion - hiring 2 additional Peer Navigators and a Behavioral Health Navigator
- Continued monitoring and evaluation
- Develop an advisory council with previous participants
- Request City funding to make the Client Support Team a permanent part of the Office



Questions & Comments

**Thank you for your
time!**

References & Appendix

References

1. OMPD. (2020). Black Lives Matter: Summary of research on the OMPD and Denver Municipal Court. Retrieved from <https://wp-denverite.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2020/08/OMPD.pdf>
2. *Colorado Health Foundation. (2020). Colorado coronavirus survey. Retrieved from <https://coloradohealth.org/news/colorado-survey-finds-major-mental-health-impact-coronavirus-outbreak-especially-among-women>*

Appendix

1. Department of Safety. (2019) High Resource Utilizer Project presentation