



TIMOTHY J. CRUZ
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
PLYMOUTH DISTRICT

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY

MAIN OFFICE:
166 MAIN STREET
BROCKTON, MA 02301
TEL: (508) 584-8120

NEWS RELEASE
OCTOBER 2, 2024

CONTACT: BETH STONE
(508) 584-8120

**PCDAO AWARDED \$900,000 FROM U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE TO
CREATE COMMUNITY COURT IN BROCKTON**

BROCKTON – Plymouth County District Attorney Timothy J. Cruz’s Office has been awarded a \$900,000 U.S. Department of Justice grant to develop a community court in Brockton.

The U.S. Department of Justice’s (DOJ) Office of Justice Programs provides federal leadership, grants, training, technical assistance, and other resources to improve the nation’s capacity to prevent and reduce crime, advance equity and fairness in the administration of justice, assist victims, and uphold the rule of law. In total, the DOJ’s Office of Justice Programs is awarding more than \$4.4 billion in grants across the country.

In June, 2024, the Plymouth County District Attorney’s Office (PCDAO) applied for the National Community Courts Initiative grant, offered through the Office of Justice Programs’ Bureau of Justice Assistance. Last Friday, PCDAO received one of only 10 awards through this grant program to establish a new community court in the City of Brockton.

“I am excited to be embarking on this endeavor,” DA Cruz said. “I am hopeful that once up and running, this Community Court will enhance public safety here in Brockton by addressing the underlying issues that lead to criminal behavior, including substance use abuse and mental health conditions.”

The court will operate as pre-adjudication, with the average length of program participation anticipated to be approximately six months.

With the \$900,000, 4-year grant, PCDAO will begin by hiring a Community Court Coordinator to oversee the day-to-day management of court operations and partnerships, which will include establishing an Advisory Board and mapping out community resources. The office intends to partner with the Old Colony YMCA and the Brockton Community Justice Support Center, who will be responsible for case management and service coordination for court participants.

PCDAO will also partner with a researcher to conduct ongoing evaluation to measure the overall impact of the project.

As part of the grant, there is also funding set aside to compensate individuals with lived experience of homelessness and/or justice involvement to provide valuable insight that will be used to inform the development of the court.

The Community Court model has evolved into differing approaches based on the needs of cities and counties that are interested in reinvigorating public trust in justice, reducing the use of incarceration, and forging new responses to crimes committed in the community.

As part of research on the issue, members of PCDAO went down to Hartford, Connecticut to observe their community court, one of the longest standing in the country. Staffers also met virtually to observe and discuss the community courts in New York and California.

“Community courts are neighborhood-focused court programs that combine the power of community and the justice system to address local problems,” DA Cruz said. “They connect people committing less serious crimes to judicially supervised substance use disorder treatment, alternative sanctions that can be individually tailored for participants, and other community-based services.”