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Community Residents are the Experts



At the Center for Court Innovation, **we believe community residents are the experts on their own neighborhoods and know best what needs to happen to achieve greater safety.** Residents are also the engines that make things work. No matter how much evidence there is that a certain approach can provide results, if community members don't buy in, it won't work. Interventions need to be grounded in community-led information gathering to ensure that those most affected by poverty, crime, racism, and institutional neglect have a chance to define what safety means and how to best achieve it.

That's why we start all initiatives by engaging residents in participatory justice research, a process of community-led investigation and idea generation that identifies issues facing a neighborhood and potential solutions. We furnish community members with the tools and support they need to find, access, and interpret relevant data

to understand why the issues exist; assess the needs of their neighbors; and shape strategies to address local safety challenges. And because young people are often at the heart of community safety issues, we make a special point to fully involve young people, as well as justice-involved people and others who may face barriers to civic engagement.



Currently, we are engaging with residents in participatory research in [the Rockaways](#) and the [South Bronx, where we are opening new justice centers](#). We will use the information gathered to strengthen our understanding of the local drivers of crime and violence, which in turn will help us identify new partners and resources, engage government and policymakers, and inform the creation of our programming for both young people and other community members.

If you want to see safe, equitable communities thrive, read and share our work with friends, colleagues, and elected officials.

Read our Guide to Safe and Equitable Communities

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