

## Overview

Project Reset diverts people out of the justice system with a proportionate, restorative, and effective response to low-level arrests. Through Project Reset, participants avoid a criminal record by completing community-based programming. The program’s approach promotes healing, encourages accountability, and strengthens public trust in the justice system by emphasizing procedural justice.

### Concept

Every year, tens of thousands of people in New York City are arrested for low-level offenses. In the past, police and prosecutors have had only two responses to choose from: prosecution—and, in some cases, jail—or releasing people without a meaningful response from the justice system. Project Reset offers a third option: a community-based program throughout New York City that is restorative for both participants and communities and also avoids the potential harms of standard case processing. Everyone who successfully completes Project Reset never sets foot in a courtroom. Instead, the district attorney declines to prosecute their cases. Participants do not get a criminal record for the case and their arrest record is sealed.

### Eligibility

Project Reset serves people 18 years and older who are issued desk appearance tickets for certain low-level, non-violent crimes, including but not limited to shoplifting, trespassing, and criminal mischief. Project Reset is currently available in all five boroughs.



## How It Works

Following an arrest, the prosecutor’s office refers eligible cases to Project Reset to engage in programming rather than go to court. Those eligible may consult with a defense attorney before deciding to participate, or at any point in the process. Project Reset staff will facilitate all intakes and scheduling for participants.

- **Prosocial Programming**  
Facilitators use a curriculum based on behavioral science, pro-social engagement, and elements of restorative practices that is tailored to the unique needs of the Reset population and the most common arrest charges.
- **Arts-based Programming**  
In Brooklyn and Manhattan, arts-based curricula are used to engage people in a process of personal reflection and to offer new and creative ways to express themselves, reflect on their experiences, and tell their stories.



- **Restorative Justice**  
In the Bronx, a restorative circle intervention allows participants to discuss their arrest and reflect with peers and



community members on the circumstances and choices that led to their arrest. Volunteers from the Bronx community are trained in restorative justice and play an active role in restorative circle discussions, sharing stories from their own lives, and helping participants build stronger community ties.

## Partnerships

Project Reset, a program of the Center for Justice Innovation, is a collaboration between District Attorney’s Offices throughout New York City, the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice, the New York Police Department, public defense agencies, and community-based program providers.

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### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit our website: [projectreset.nyc](https://projectreset.nyc)

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