

COMMUNITY-MINDED

After nearly 10 years of success reducing recidivism rates in neighborhoods east of the Anacostia River, the District of Columbia Superior Court is expanding its Community Courts program citywide. Community courts aren't located outside of the courthouse — the name comes from the fact that cases are assigned and offenders do community service based on where the crime took place. The court launched the East of the River Community Court in 2002, sending all misdemeanor cases, aside from domestic violence, that took place in the 6th and 7th police districts to a single judge. The judge regularly meets with community members and works with social service agencies to get offenders the support they need. "Our goal is to reduce recidivism [and] provide diversion from the criminal justice system for nonviolent, low-level offenders," said presiding criminal division Judge **Russell Canan**. All of the city's seven police districts have been assigned judges; to keep dockets even, the 2d and 4th districts covering northwest and far northeast communities will fall under one judge, because crimes rates in those areas are lower. The new system will go into effect in January. — Zoe Tillman