DC SUPERIOR COURT'S COMMUNITY COURT APPROACH DRAMATICALLY REDUCES RECIDIVISM

WASHINGTON, DC – The DC Superior Court today released a study conducted by WESTAT, which found that the East of the River Community Court (ERCC) reduced recidivism by as much as 60%. DC Superior Court Chief Judge Lee Satterfield expanded the Community Court program to all 8 wards/all 7 police districts of the city in January of this year.

"When we saw the preliminary results of the study, we knew that we had to expand the community court to all neighborhoods in the city. This approach reduces recidivism, makes our neighborhoods safer, provides communities with restitution for the damage done, and helps address the underlying problems that cause defendants' criminal behavior," Chief Judge Satterfield explained. "This is a win-win and we wanted DC residents in every ward to benefit."

The study compared defendants successfully completing a voluntary ERCC diversion program to a similar group of defendants in the Metropolitan Police Department's (MPD's) 5th District and found that after a year "recidivism (was) substantially and significantly lower among ERCC defendants than among 5th District defendants." **Specifically, ERCC defendants were 60% less likely to be rearrested while participating in the diversion program, and 42% less likely to be rearrested in the year following completion of the diversion program.**

 Chief Judge Satterfield added "We were pleased to be able to expand this approach to communities throughout the city and help reduce low-level crimes. Superior Court is part of this community and our role is not just to process cases, but to dispense justice in a way that improves the quality of life for all DC residents."

For more information on the Community Court approach, and Superior Court's Problem-Solving Court approach, click here. Prior media coverage of DC's community courts can be found here.

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