

Community Court FAQs

1. What is Community Court?

A Community Court is an alternative problem-solving court. It differs from traditional court in that it seeks to identify and address the underlying challenges of court participants that may contribute to further criminal activity. Its goal is to build stronger and safer neighborhoods and reduce recidivism.

A Community Resource Center is an integral component of Community Court. This Resource Center will consist of community partners who provide a wide array of services. The Community Resource Center will be available to all members of the public in addition to the Community Court participants.

2. How do Community Courts work?

Community Courts provide services and accountability for those who are eligible and choose to participate. An assessment will be conducted for all Community Court participants to identify challenges and strengths. The assessment will provide information to help determine what follow-up steps an individual Community Court participant will be required to take. In addition, Community Court participants will likely be required to perform community service.

Community Court increases collaboration between the criminal justice system and other systems, including mental health, substance use disorder, human services, housing, employment, and education. King County Community Court in Redmond is a collaborative effort between King County District Court, King County Library System, City of Redmond and Community and Service Providers.

3. Do Community Courts work?

“A Comprehensive Evaluation of the Red Hook Community Justice Center” was published in 2013 and found positive outcomes. This Community Court, located in Brooklyn and established in 2000, was one of the first in the nation. Here are some of the findings of the evaluation:

- Increased cost efficiencies:
 - Decreased costs to victims
 - Savings outweighed program costs by a factor of nearly 2 to 1
- Reduced use of jail [35% fewer offenders received jail sentences]
- Reduced recidivism [10% reduction]
- Reduced crime [sustained decrease in both felony and misdemeanor arrests]

4. Why would you hold Community Court in the library?

The placement of the Community Court within the Redmond Library aligns with the strategic focus of the King County Library System: “*To create opportunities through meaningful connections*”. The Library seeks to do this by connecting people with:

- Information and services to navigate life’s complexities and biases
- Equitable avenues to build the skills and knowledge needed for success
- One another to bridge differences and create communities of inclusion and belonging

- To learn more: <http://kcls.org/strategic-focus/>.

Goals of the Community Court include reintegrating participants into the community and healing the harm that their offenses might have caused. The library is a community place for all, and the Resource Center that is open during Community Court hours is for both court participants and the community to use.

Many people who have had repeated contact with courts develop a negative association with the actual location of the courthouse. Having court hearings in a safe, neutral and community-centered location encourages the participants to stay engaged and removes the negative stigma associated with the courthouse.

5. What will security look like for Community Court?

By state law weapons screening is mandated in all courthouses. As the library is hosting a courtroom, it is therefore subject to screening for the room used as a courtroom while Community Court is being held.

There will be a security screener in the library that will wand individuals before entering the courtroom. Bags will be checked before entering the courtroom.

No screening will be required to enter the library proper or any room except the room used for the courtroom.

6. What are the most common crimes that will be heard in Community Court?

- Theft 3
- Possession of Stolen Prop 3
- Urinating in Public
- Criminal Trespass 1 and 2
- Minor in possession/consumption
- Possession of liquor in a park
- In a park after closing
- Possession of Drug Paraphernalia
- Possession of Marijuana (under 21)
- Unlawful bus conduct
- Disorderly Conduct

7. Who is eligible for Community Court?

People who are charged with misdemeanor offenses in Redmond, and have not had violent felony charges in the last 5 years, or any prior sex offense charges. Driving related violations are not eligible for Community Court.

8. What services are available for Community Court participants at the Community Resource Center?

Services/service providers that may be available are:

- Substance Abuse Assessment/Support

- Mental Health Assessment/Support
- Public Assistance Support
- Housing Assistance
- Employment Assistance
- GED/Education/Training Programs
- Food Banks/Food Assistance Programs
- Civil Legal Aid
- Dispute Resolution & Mediation Services

9. Who can use the Community Resource Center?

Anyone can use the Community Resource Center. You do not have to be involved with Community Court, just come on in!

10. How often and when will the Community Resource Center be open?

The Community Resource Center is open weekly, every Wednesday from 1:30pm – 3:30pm.

11. Can the general public attend Community Court?

Community Court is open to the public. Anyone entering the courtroom must go through the required security screening.

12. Can I visit, participate or volunteer for the Community Court or the Community Resource Center?

Yes! We love visitors, participants and volunteers.

13. Who should I contact about Community Court and/or the Community Resource Center?

Contact Ericka Cooley at Ericka.Cooley@kingcounty.gov or 206.477.4990.

14. Who should I call if I received a hearing notice for Community Court and am unable to attend my court date?

Contact Ericka Cooley at Ericka.Cooley@kingcounty.gov or 206.477.4990.