

## THE RJCC PROCESS

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A person is charged with a non-violent felony or misdemeanor.



Case is found eligible for the RJCC; both the person charged and the person harmed agreed to participate; preliminary hearing is waived.



Pre-Circle: The Circle Keeper contacts all participants and prepares them for the peace circle.



Peace Circle: The Circle Keeper guides a confidential conversation about the harm caused and how to repair it.



All peace circle participants create and agree to the Repair of Harm Agreement. It is submitted to the RJCC.



The person charged completes all of the requirements of the Repair of Harm Agreement.



The case is dismissed.

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY



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# RESTORATIVE JUSTICE COMMUNITY COURT

A Restorative Approach to  
Crime and Conflict

**RJCC**  
North Lawndale, Chicago

Hon. Timothy C. Evans  
Chief Judge

Hon. Colleen F. Sheehan  
RJCC Judge

Circuit Court of Cook County  
Restorative Justice Community Court  
3605 W. Fillmore St, Chicago, IL 60624

## WHAT IS THE RJCC?

The Restorative Justice Community Court (RJCC) is a criminal court in North Lawndale, a neighborhood on Chicago's West Side. Unlike most criminal courts, the RJCC practices **restorative justice**, which means it empowers the community to create solutions to repair the harm caused by crime and conflict. For every case, the RJCC brings together the person charged, the person harmed, and relevant community members in a **peace circle**, which is a confidential conversation guided by a trained member of the North Lawndale community. All members of the peace circle work together to write a **Repair of Harm Agreement**, which is a legal document containing the requirements the group deemed necessary to repair the harm from the crime. If the person charged completes all of the requirements of the Repair of Harm Agreement, the case will be dismissed.

### WHO QUALIFIES?

For a case to be eligible, the person charged must:

1. be 18-26 years old;
2. have been charged with a non-violent felony or misdemeanor;
3. live in North Lawndale;
4. have a non-violent criminal history;
5. accept responsibility for the harm caused;

and

6. the person charged and person harmed must both be willing to participate in the RJCC.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **What Is Required of the Person Charged?**

The person charged must be willing to accept responsibility for the harm caused. He or she must actively participate in all RJCC processes, including pre-circle meetings and one or more peace circles. The person charged must complete all of the requirements of the Repair of Harm Agreement that he or she helped create in the peace circle, which may include things such as community service, job training, counseling, or restitution (paying for damages).

### **How Will the Person Charged Benefit?**

The person charged will benefit by having the case dismissed if he or she successfully fulfills the terms of the Repair of Harm Agreement. The person charged will have an opportunity to discuss and understand the causes and consequences of his or her actions through the peace circle process, as well as to repair the relationship with the person harmed and the community.

### **What Is Asked of the Person Harmed?**

The person harmed is asked to actively participate in all RJCC processes, including pre-circle meetings and one or more peace circles.

### **How Will the Person Harmed Benefit?**

The person harmed will have the opportunity to express how and why he or she was hurt by the crime and directly ask the person charged for what is needed to heal from the incident.

### **How Is the Community Involved?**

Members of the community are trained by the RJCC to participate in peace circles and create Repair of Harm Agreements. They also provide support to the person charged and person harmed.

### **How Will North Lawndale Benefit?**

- The RJCC aims to reduce crime and incarceration, restore relationships within North Lawndale and help young adults become positive role models in the community.
- North Lawndale residents will have the opportunity to work with the RJCC to determine the root causes of crime in the area and how they should be resolved.

### **What if the Person Charged Does Not Fulfill the RJCC Requirements?**

1. If there are circumstances preventing the person charged from cooperating, additional support services will be offered.
2. If the person charged is unwilling to cooperate, the case will be transferred out of the RJCC to the appropriate felony or misdemeanor trial court.

### **How Long Does the Process Last?**

The process typically lasts for 6 months to one year, depending on the case.