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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **DA McMahon, Center for Court Innovation Launch Project RESET on Staten Island**

*\*\*Diversion program offers low-level, non-violent offenders an opportunity to avoid a criminal record by engaging in community-based interventions\*\**

Staten Island, N.Y. — Today, Richmond County District Attorney Michael E. McMahon and the Center for Court Innovation announced the launch of Project RESET on Staten Island, a diversion program that helps individuals avoid a criminal record for certain low-level, non-violent offenses by engaging community-based interventions that promote accountability and reflection about the criminal justice system and the impact of their arrest. By diverting participants from court, Project Reset saves resources while producing positive results for the community. An evaluation of a Project Reset pilot found participants were significantly less likely than defendants in a comparison group to be convicted of a new crime within one year.

Project RESET in Staten Island is provided by the Staten Island Justice Center in partnership with the Richmond County District Attorney's Office. In order to deliver this vital program to Staten Islanders during this ongoing public health crisis, all program operations will be remote and participants can complete their sessions through virtual individual and group programming via phone and videoconference. Referrals and compliance information will be shared via a confidential online case tracker tool.

“Many individuals who have committed low-level, non-violent offenses are desperately in need of the right tools to fix the negative consequences that their actions have had both in their own lives and in our communities. Project RESET allows for a chance to better understand and address the root causes of crime — whether due to mental illness, substance abuse, or poverty — in order to help individuals make better choices and avoid the revolving door of the criminal justice system, while still holding them accountable and greatly benefiting the safety our communities,” **said District Attorney Michael E. McMahon.** “Even in these uncer-

tain times, our office continues to operate at full speed and remains committed to working to find ways to make the dispositions of the criminal justice system more meaningful and long-lasting for public safety. We have worked tirelessly with the NYPD to keep major crimes at historic lows on Staten Island, and at the same time have continued to provide more opportunities for those in need to find help through diversion programs. Together with the Center for Court Innovation and our community partners, we will ensure that Project RESET has a successful and long-lasting positive impact for the people of Staten Island. This innovative program holds individuals accountable for their actions, strengthens trust in the criminal justice system, and makes our communities a safer place for all.”

**Adam Mansky, Director of Criminal Justice at the Center for Court Innovation said,** “The Center for Court Innovation is pleased to work with the Richmond County District Attorney's Office to launch Project Reset on Staten Island. Project Reset is an effective and proportionate response to low-level offending that promotes reflection and accountability without the potential collateral consequences of traditional prosecution. By diverting people out of the criminal justice system and into robust community-based programming, Project Reset gives participants the opportunity to address their arrest in a meaningful way while avoiding the threat of warrant or conviction. Project's Reset's support by City Council, and City Leadership such as Speaker Corey Johnson and the Mayor's Office, represents a significant commitment to proportionate justice.”

**Council Speaker Corey Johnson said,** “For years, the City Council has been committed to Project Reset, a successful diversion program that offers people arrested on low-level offenses a more meaningful and productive intervention than the traditional court process. Participants in the program are much less likely to be arrested than their peers - further proof that the criminal legal system can make the city safer without being overly punitive. I commend District Attorney McMahon for launching Project Reset in Staten Island, and thank the Center for Court Innovation for its continued work toward a more just New York.”

The District Attorney’s Office carefully reviews and selects cases eligible for Project RESET and works closely with the Staten Island Justice Center and community partners to ensure each individual receives comprehensive assessments and an individualized approach to intervention. Following arrest, those who are eligible will meet with a case manager and develop a customized action plan that emphasizes personal accountability, and incorporates cognitive behavioral therapy, community social services, restorative justice, and placemaking. Interventions are one-on-one and group counseling sessions, and will expand to include beautification of public spaces and other types of service that benefit the community as the program grows. Eligible individuals must complete two comprehensive sessions in order to fully resolve their case without a criminal record. Project RESET was originally offered exclusively for youthful offenders, but has since expanded its reach to include adult low-level, nonviolent offenses.

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