

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION FOR “INNOVATIONS IN PEACEMAKING: A GRASS ROOTS
PERSPECTIVE”

27th Annual National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts Conference

Buffalo, NY – June 10-13, 2015

*“Haz la Paz”: How State Courts are Using Peacemaking to Address
Disputes in High-Crime Neighborhoods*

June 12, 2015

Presenter: Sarah Reckess, Esq.

Center for Court Innovation

Description of the session:

Innovations in Peacemaking: a Grass Roots Perspective will provide skill building for attendees at the 27th Annual National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts Conference, which attracts judges, attorneys, and other justice system practitioners from around the United States. This conference is hosted by the Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission, which is composed of judges, attorneys and court personnel from New York State who develop strategies to make the court system more responsive to the concerns of people of color. The Commission educates and advises decision makers in the New York State Court System on the issues affecting both employees and litigants of color and implements recommendations to address these issues.

The project director for the Center for Court Innovation’s Syracuse office will provide an overview of two demonstration projects that divert cases from the court and deliver community-based peacemaking justice. Located in Red Hook, Brooklyn, and the Near Westside, Syracuse, these Center projects are testing the use of peacemaking, a traditional, Native American dispute resolution practice, in a state court setting.

Content covered:

The workshop will introduce attendees to Native American peacemaking, which is practiced by Haudenosaunee tribes in New York, and how the Center for Court Innovation is adapting this model for the New York State court system. The workshop discusses the Center for Court Innovation’s practice of locating peacemaking programs in neighborhoods of social disorder as a means of improving collective efficacy and social cohesion among residents. Research from

the U.S. Department of Justice suggests that neighborhoods with high collective efficacy and social cohesion have lower crime rates.

Learning objectives for the workshop:

1. Identify how peacemaking, a traditional form of dispute resolution practiced by many Native American tribes, is different from mediation.
2. Understand how and why peacemaking is being implemented in a New York state court.
3. Identify which cases are appropriate for diversion from the court system into peacemaking.