

**RESTORATIVE JUSTICE FACILITATOR DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE
UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS**

The District of Massachusetts invites applications for its first Restorative Justice Facilitator Development Initiative (“Initiative”). Participants will review and explore the principles of restorative justice and their application in the District’s Restorative Justice Program. The Initiative will consist of a four-day experiential and classroom component, planned for June 2025, and a year-long apprenticeship component. After completion of both components, participants will be eligible to serve and be compensated as facilitators in the District’s Restorative Justice Program.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The District of Massachusetts has run a Restorative Justice Program (“RJ Program”) since 2015. About 200 defendants have participated over the past nine years. The RJ Program has supported many of them in transforming their lives. Victims and surrogate victims have also participated and have found it healing and empowering. The Court is committed to expanding the RJ Program so that more people can participate. To do this, we need additional trained facilitators.

Within criminal justice systems, restorative practices have numerous applications and can appear in various formats. The RJ Program is rooted in the teachings of Indigenous peoples throughout the world. It has been developed, executed, and administered by the U.S. Probation & Pretrial Services Office, in partnership with community-based RJ practitioners. Since the RJ Program involves responsible parties, those who have been harmed, and community members, it is crucial to ensure that the Program is delivered in a purposeful manner by capable practitioners. Continued high levels of support and oversight for all have contributed to its success.

The RJ Program provides a robust, yet manageable, experience that: evokes a deeper understanding of all crime as harm; encourages meaningful acceptance of responsibility; emphasizes the connection between one’s actions and their harms on others; and provides victims, survivors, and community members opportunities to engage in the justice system in impactful ways. Our objective is to provide a restorative lens through which past, current, and future behavior can be processed to prevent future harms. The RJ Program was developed in a manner that honors the principles of restorative justice, while meeting the needs of our Court.

The RJ Program consists of four parts:

- (1) An introductory meeting between a facilitator and the defendant to begin building a relationship, introduce the concepts of restorative justice, assess the participant’s needs and openness to the concepts, and identify potential harmed parties and/or community-member matches for the workshop.
- (2) A sixteen-hour, in-person workshop. The main objectives of the workshop are: (a) to educate on RJ principles and practices; (b) to evoke a deeper understanding of all crime as harm; and (c) to explore meaningful acceptance of responsibility and the impact of one’s harms on others through relationship-building among responsible parties,

harmed parties, and community members. These objectives are accomplished through the unique experiential learning gained from participating in a peacemaking circle. Typically, a workshop includes the following participants: several persons harmed by crime, six to ten defendants, and several persons from court-related organizations or the community. The workshops are co-led by one of the RJ Program's trained facilitators and a woman with experience in restorative practices following the murder of her son.

- (3) The RJ Program's third part consists of one or both of the following:
- a. A trauma-informed RJ reading group that meets once a week for five weeks to discuss readings about common types of trauma and consider whether serious harms done to participants in the group might be related to the harms they subsequently caused to others. The sessions meet virtually and follow the format of a peacemaking circle.
 - b. Alternatively, or in addition to the reading group, participants review selected articles and videos designed to deepen an understanding of genuine acceptance of responsibility and accountability. Participants are encouraged to write or record reflections on the materials they read and watch.
- (4) A facilitated restorative conference between the defendant and one or more persons harmed by the defendant's conduct, or one or more surrogate victims. Optional support persons for both the defendant and the victim(s) may also attend the conference. At the conference, victims are invited to express how the defendant's crime (or a similar crime, if a surrogate victim participates) has affected them, and to ask the defendant questions. Defendants are invited to discuss their path to a genuine acceptance of responsibility for the harm they have caused. All participants in the conference are invited to discuss ways in which the defendant could meaningfully repair the harm caused as much as possible. The facilitator meets with each participant at least once in advance to prepare for the conference. Participation in the conference is entirely voluntary, and victims are never pressured or encouraged to forgive defendants.

APPLICANT QUALIFICATIONS

The District of Massachusetts is an equal opportunity employer that is committed to creating a diversified Restorative Justice Facilitator Development Initiative.

Restorative justice is an inclusive experience, giving voice to those who are often not heard in the current criminal justice system. We seek facilitators reflecting the full range of diversity and backgrounds in our community. We especially seek applications from persons with prior experience in the criminal justice system or the Court's RJ Program as a victim, witness, defendant, or family member.

FACILITATOR DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE OVERVIEW

Participation in the Initiative requires a significant, long-term commitment to the RJ Program. The first part of the Initiative will be a four-day training in Boston, tentatively scheduled for the week of June 9, 2025. The training will consist of experiential education about RJ principles and their application to the criminal justice system, as well as training on the curriculum of the Court's RJ Program. Next, each participant will serve as an apprentice to a current facilitator in the Court's RJ Program, a phase that will take place over the course of approximately one year. During the apprenticeship phase, trainees will be expected to participate in all four phases of the RJ Program at least once.

After the apprenticeship, some trainees may be invited to become long-term facilitators for our RJ Program. We expect that, when facilitating in the RJ Program, these individuals will be paid.

Each applicant selected for the Initiative will be provided a stipend of up to \$4,000 for their participation. Half of the stipend will be provided after the participant attends the four-day training and completes the apprenticeship for Parts 1 and 2 of the RJ Program. The other half of the stipend will be provided after the participant concludes the remainder of the apprenticeship and receives their certificate of completion. To receive the stipend, a participant must have a valid social security number. Participants may decline the stipend.

Individuals participating in the Initiative will be required to review and comply with confidentiality and nondisclosure obligations that apply to employees of the Court. These obligations arise from the need to promote public confidence in the integrity of the judicial system, including by acting to ensure that no unauthorized disclosures of confidential information about the RJ Program or its various participants (many of whom are defendants or victims in ongoing criminal cases) occur. Further details on applicable confidentiality obligations will be provided in writing to selected applicants.

If interested in applying, please complete the application on the next page and submit it via email to RJFacilitatorApplication@mad.uscourts.gov by **January 31, 2025**. Applicants may be invited to interview thereafter. It is anticipated that invitations to participate in the Initiative will be extended by the end of March 2025.

APPLICATION

Name:

Address:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

Please answer the following questions in the space provided.

1. Why do you want to participate in the Restorative Justice Facilitator Development Initiative?

2. Please describe your experience with Restorative Justice.

3. Please describe your experience with the criminal justice system.

4. What do you think are the characteristics of a good RJ facilitator?

5. Please describe your experience working with people from a diverse range of backgrounds.

6. Please either attach a resume or list your education and work history on the back of this page.

7. Please list one person we may contact as a reference and identify the best way of contacting them.