



Teen Court - Law Enforcement Initiative

Teen Court is a time tested program introduced in the city of Santa Barbara in 1992 by Judge Thomas Adams. In the twenty-plus years of Teen Court, the program has been replicated across Santa Barbara County. The program has been expanded in communities such as Carpinteria, Lompoc, Santa Ynez and Santa Maria. It is the oldest and largest Teen Court in California.

Project Description:

The Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse – Restorative Justice Teen Court is a community-based Teen Court that utilizes a combination of the Adult Judge and Peer Jury models. Volunteer adult judges preside over the court and instruct and mentor the Peer Jury in their deliberations. A panel of youth volunteer jurors directly questions the respondent and makes the sentencing determinations.

Law enforcement will refer juveniles who are cited for:

- 11357(b) H&S possession of less than one ounce of marijuana
- 11357(e) H&S possession of less than one ounce of marijuana on school grounds
- 308(b) PC possession of smoking paraphernalia
- 13A-3 CO possession of drug paraphernalia
- 25662(a) B&P possession of an alcoholic beverage by a minor
- 23222 VC possession of an open container containing an alcoholic beverage or marijuana while driving a motor vehicle
- 23223 VC possession of an open container in a motor vehicle

or any other non detainable alcohol or drug offense as determined by the Probation Department.

The program is designed to keep youth out of the juvenile justice system while still holding them accountable for their actions. The program under this proposal will serve first-time juvenile offenders between the ages of 10 and 18 who freely admit responsibility for their actions.

Population Served:

The population served by this project will be youth referred to the Teen Court Program by the Law Enforcement agency of contact. Qualifications for the program include; first

time offenders, admitting responsibility, agreeing to comply with terms and conditions of sentencing contract.

Services and Funding Sources:

Funding for the Teen Court are federal, state, and local governments sources along with private foundations and sliding scale services fees. No fees will be charged to partner law enforcement agencies to process these referrals.

In lieu of regular juvenile court, the youth appears before a jury of peers who decide upon a legally binding sentence drawn from a menu of offense-specific sentencing options that include community service, jury duty, participation in education classes and support groups, and substance abuse treatment.

The courtroom becomes a classroom through which teens learn to understand and respect the law by practicing the concepts of the law, in a courtroom of law. If youth complete their Teen Court contract, their offense is shown as “closed.” If they choose not to accept the Teen Court terms and conditions they are referred back to the referring law enforcement agency for traditional processing. The offender’s parent(s)/legal guardian(s) are involved throughout the entire process. They are required to attend the initial intake appointment, Teen Court hearing, and alcohol and/or drug treatment process.

Goal of Project:

The goal of the project is to divert clients from the criminal justice system and to help them achieve sustained sobriety. Our core client outcome measures are the number of clients agreeing to participate in the Teen Court Program compared with the number of clients that successfully complete all terms of the contract.

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