



Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

Teen Court

Annual Report
Fiscal Year 2005-2006
Submitted March 2007

***Executive Summary
Legislative Report
Teen Court
2005-2006 Fiscal Year***

Teen Court programs operate in accordance with the General Statutes (143B-520) of the state of North Carolina as it pertains to providing services to youth. Teen Court programs provide a community resource for the diversion of cases in which a juvenile has allegedly committed certain offenses for hearing by a jury of the juvenile's peers. As a participant in the Teen Court program the juvenile may be required to perform community service, pay restitution, participate in counseling, attend educational seminars and cooperate with other programs and services geared towards developing and maintaining positive behavior and appropriate social skills.

During the fiscal year 2005-2006, JCPC funded Teen Court programs were operating in 42 counties, providing services to 2,701 juveniles. On average the Teen Court Program costs the state \$499 student of the total cost of \$828 per student. Support at the local level of these programs is demonstrated by the more than \$891,623 contributed from in-kind, local and other funding sources that provide support to Teen Court programs. Participants in Teen Court programs paid \$5,031 dollars in restitution, worked over 37,000 hours of community services, were required to attend 1709 seminars and write 938 letters of apology.

The program's long-term goals include: the reduction of juvenile crime; teaching youth to be accountable for their actions; developing responsible decision making skills; reducing the caseload for intake counselors, juvenile court and district court; educating youth on the justice system; promoting community collaboration; strengthening the family and promoting long-term behavioral change that leads to enhance public safety. Teen Court programs continue to provide delinquency prevention programs to youth across the state of North Carolina.

Historical Overview

Legislative support for Teen Court began during the 1993 Session of the North Carolina General Assembly (Session Laws, Chapter 561, Section 89). Pursuant to this legislation, the Cumberland County Dispute Resolution Center received funding through the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) to implement a Teen Court program for the 12th Judicial District. Funding was expanded during the special legislative session the following spring (1993 Session Laws, Extra Session 1994, Chapter 24, Section 40). The \$75,000 appropriation that the AOC received at that time allowed for the continued funding of the program in Cumberland County, as well as the establishment of new programs in Buncombe and Durham Counties.

In 1996-97, funding for a program in Rockingham County was added to the AOC's budget. In the 1997 Session (Chapter 443, Section 18.24), the General Assembly provided funding to establish new Teen Court programs in Orange, Columbus, Brunswick, Forsyth, Cabarrus and Wake counties. The 1998 Session (Chapter 212, Section 16.4) provided additional funds to expand Teen Courts into Duplin, Onslow and Guilford counties. The 2003 Session of the NC General Assembly transferred funds formerly designated for Teen Court Programs to the county Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) fund. These funds were during 2002-03 for the Teen Court Programs in those counties. For the third consecutive year the Department has given the area offices the responsibility of Teen Court Program management. This need is a direct result of the Teen Court Coordinator position being eliminated due to budget constraints.

The Teen Court Programs have been incorporated into the ongoing county JCPC process with local support and oversight. During the FY 2005-06 Teen Court had a total operating budget of \$2,238,647 which included money received from local entities and in-kind contributions. Of this total amount, the Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, by way of the local JCPCs, provided \$1,347,024 which is equal to 61% of the operating budget. During FY 2004-05 the Teen Court Operating budget was \$2,386,634. The department provided \$1,446,706, which was also equivalent to 61% of the operating budget.

The Teen Court Model

Teen Court is a juvenile justice program that provides a community resource for the diversion of cases in which a juvenile has allegedly committed certain offenses for hearing by a jury of the juvenile's peers. Teen Court Programs serve many functions. In addition to providing a mechanism for holding youthful offenders accountable and educating youth on the legal system, teen courts also provide an avenue for developing, enhancing, and practicing life

skills in an effort for youth to contribute to the betterment of their respective communities.

Teen Court is appropriate for first time youthful offenders charged with misdemeanors and other offenses that have not led to serious injury. Teen Court Programs also provide services to youth that violate school policies, such as; truancy and disorderly conduct. The target population for Teen Court consists of youth aged 10-17. Youth older than 17, can participate in the program if they are currently enrolled in an educational program. The program receives referrals from Juvenile Court, Law Enforcement, School Resource Officers and other School Personnel, District Court and Parents.

In the typical teen court model, cases are heard and a jury of juvenile peers imposes sentences on juvenile offenders. Usually the juveniles referred are first offenders charged with misdemeanor offenses to which they have already admitted guilt. Although most juveniles referred to teen court are under the age of 16 when they commit their offense, some cases are heard on referral from adult district court. At the teen court session, the roles .ie. defense attorney, prosecuting attorney, bailiff, clerk, and jurors are played by student volunteers. During the actual sessions only the judge is an adult, usually a sitting or retired judge or an attorney who has been trained as a teen court judge.

Once a jury has listened to the defendant's story and heard arguments by both attorneys, jury members retire to consider the appropriate constructive sentence. Sentences imposed by teen juries must fall within the guidelines that have been established with the concurrence of the court and the District Attorney's Office. Sentences may include community service work, the requirement to serve on a number of future teen court juries, attendance at educational seminars, attendance at behavioral counseling sessions or payment of monetary restitution (up to established limits). Defendants may also be subject to curfews, required to write letters of apology or other rehabilitative measures as deemed appropriate by the jury or imposed by the judge.

Each teen court program must have the endorsement of the Chief District Court Judge, Chief Court Counselor, and District Attorney's Office within the judicial district to be served by the program. Teen court programs are required to report regularly throughout the year to the Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention on the expenditure of funds, on the operations of the programs, and on relevant statistical data.

Program Support and Technical Assistance

The North Carolina Teen Court Association was formed to provide ongoing support for programs around the State and to sustain professional growth of the program directors and strengthen and expand the Teen Court Model.

One of the major events sponsored by the association is the statewide Teen Court Summit. This is an event that brings together more than 300 adult leaders and teen volunteers. Participants attend training seminars, mock trial competitions and have the opportunity to showcase what they are doing in their respective communities. The summit was held in April 2006 in Gastonia and had participants from across the state.

The association also sponsors an annual conference. Providers receive training on topics related to programming for youth and other issues concerning youth. The conference also allows the programs to receive updates on standards, operating procedures and Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention policies. This year the conference was held in conjunction with the North Carolina Association of Community Restitution Programs conference in Asheboro, NC. Approximately 60 participants were in attendance representing both Teen Court and Community Restitution programs.

The Teen Court Summits and the Annual Conferences, provide the opportunity for Teen Court Program Providers and volunteers to network and explore ideas for "best practices" in teen court program operations. In addition to the two major events that the association sponsors, the association meets regularly to discuss day to day programming, strategic planning and funding challenges.

Statistical Comparison

Table I examines the growth of the Teen Court program by comparing fiscal year 2005-2006 to the previous fiscal years.

Table I

Measure	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
# Of programs	32	36	42	48	42
Referrals	2173	2076	2370	3126	3029
Admissions	1862	1841	2106	2743	2701
% Served	86%	87%	89%	88%	89%
<u>Most Common Offenses</u>					
Affrays (fighting)	16%	19%	17%	25%	18%
Larc/Poss Stolen Prop	19%	19%	21%	17%	15%
Shoplifting	12%	6%	4%	5%	5%
Assault	13%	16%	13%	12%	20%
Drugs/Paraphernalia	8%	9%	9%	8%	9%
Property Damage	4%	3%	2%	4%	4%
Weapon (not firearm)	4%	7%	7%	6%	9%
Misd. B&E	3%	2%	1%	1%	2%
All Others	21%	19%	21%	22%	18%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<u>Results Arising From Teen Court Dispositions</u>					
Comm. Serv Hrs	31,704	33,454	40,244	38,643	37,131
Restitution Pd.	\$4,483	\$6,687	\$9,951	\$3740	\$5,031
Jury Duties Perfd.	4,634	4,238	6,408	7,450	7,573
Educ Seminars	1,717	1197	1,750	2,186	1,709
Apology Letters	955	715	895	1080	938
Essays Written	480	370	598	860	710

The statistical comparison in Table I above suggests the following in regards to services: Services to youth with reported involvement in affrays and charged with possession of stolen property, have decreased, while services to youth involved with assaults, drugs/paraphernalia and weapon possession have increased. Services to youth involved with shoplifting and property damage, have maintained at the same level as the previous year. In terms of court dispositions, there has been over 37,100 community service hours performed, \$5,031 collected in restitution and the involvement of over 6,796 adult and youth volunteers. The amount collected for restitution had increased from the previous fiscal year (2004-2005) by over \$1200.

Table II
Teen Court Annual Summary
Fiscal Year 2005-2006

1. Referral received	3029	a) Not accepted	226
		b) Not screened	102
2. Accepted for participation	2701		
3. Total Volunteers	6796	a) Students	5816
		b) Adults	980
4. Withdrew before hearing	75		
5. Hearings Conducted	2626		
6. Number of completions	2424		
a) Successful dispositions	2180		
b) Terminations for noncompliance	244		
7. Dispositions Ordered			
a) Community service hours ordered	41,879		
b) Restitution ordered	\$6,048		
c) Jury duties ordered	8,815		
d) Educational seminars ordered	2,065		
e) Apology letters	1,106		
f) Essays	900		
8. Dispositions Completed			
a) Community service hours performed	37,131		
b) Restitution paid	\$5,031		
c) Jury duties performed	7,573		
d) Educational seminars attended	1,709		
e) Apology Letters	938		
f) Essays completed	710		
9. Type of offenses heard			
Assault	520	(20%)	
Affray	466	(18%)	
Larceny/Poss. Stolen Property	382	(15%)	
Possession of Weapon (not firearm)	232	(9%)	
Disorderly Conduct	226	(9%)	
Poss. Drugs/paraphernalia	221	(9%)	
Shoplifting	130	(5%)	
Property Damage	115	(4%)	
All Others	243	(10%)	
Totals	2626	100%	

10. Referral Source	Number Referred	% of Total Referrals
Juvenile Intake/Court	584	22%
SRO	1219	40%
Law Enforcement	423	16%
School	176	6%
District Court	502	17%
Other	125	5%
Total	3029	100%

11. Demographics of admitted defendants		
RACE		
Black	1365	53%
White	1076	41%
Hispanic	130	5%
Other	56	1%
Total	2626	100%
GENDER		
Male	1733	66%
Female	893	36%
Total	2626	100%

12. Sources of financial support 2005-2006

	County	JCPC \$	LOCAL \$	IN-KIND \$	OTHER \$	TOTAL \$
1	Alamance	\$55,131	\$800	\$43,400	\$0	\$99,331
2	Bladen	\$20,955	\$0	\$2,829	\$0	\$23,784
3	Brunswick	\$39,914	\$0	\$20,050	\$0	\$59,964
4	Buncombe	\$16,954	\$10,000	\$30,192	\$0	\$57,146
5	Cabarrus	\$45,261	\$3,000	\$49,115	\$17,146	\$114,522
6	Camden	\$2,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,500
7	Carteret	\$47,500	\$0	\$23,480	\$0	\$70,980
8	Caswell	\$14,741	\$8,665	\$0	\$0	\$23,406
9	Chatham	\$16,150	\$8,281	\$3,173	\$0	\$27,604
10	Chowan	\$17,982	\$0	\$1,818	\$0	\$19,800
11	Columbus	\$67,450	\$0	\$18,900	\$0	\$86,350
12	Craven	\$11,031	\$44,678	\$6,650	\$0	\$62,359
13	Cumberland	\$55,449	\$3,885	\$15,021	\$0	\$74,355
14	Currituck	\$11,153	\$3,346	\$0	\$0	\$14,499
15	Dare	\$5,750	\$0	\$2,400	\$17,250	\$25,400
16	Duplin	\$19,905	\$0	\$1,991	\$0	\$21,896
17	Durham	\$83,100	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$13,123	\$126,223
18	Edgecombe	\$7,573	\$6,757	\$3,200	\$44,317	\$61,847
19	Forsyth	\$35,330	\$32,738	\$10,000	\$0	\$78,068
20	Gaston	\$35,260	\$7,052	\$86,603	\$0	\$128,915
21	Gates	\$27,674	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$27,674
22	Greene	\$34,816	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$34,816
23	Guilford	\$63,869	\$23,000	\$2,100	\$4,049	\$93,018
24	Hertford	\$17,056	\$2,000	\$0	\$0	\$19,056
25	Lenoir	\$29,727	\$0	\$8,339	\$0	\$38,066
26	Moore	\$79,567	\$11,861	\$32,314	\$1,950	\$125,692
27	Nash	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$40,000	\$40,000
28	New Hano	\$35,694	\$0	\$7,600	\$0	\$43,294
29	Onslow	\$17,000	\$0	\$5,280	\$0	\$22,280
30	Orange	\$32,000	\$9,600	\$0	\$0	\$41,600
31	Pasquotank	\$17,982	\$1,818	\$0	\$0	\$19,800
32	Pender	\$7,000	\$0	\$4,000	\$0	\$11,000
33	Perquimas	\$6,000	\$840	\$0	\$0	\$6,840
34	Person	\$23,540	\$3,590	\$8,500	\$1,700	\$37,330
35	Pitt	\$56,454	\$0	\$14,640	\$0	\$71,094
36	Randolph	\$54,574	\$0	\$17,317	\$0	\$71,891
37	Rockingham	\$31,231	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$31,231
38	Rowan	\$31,697	\$0	\$14,544	\$0	\$46,241
39	Sampson	\$32,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$32,500
40	Wake	\$83,319	\$24,996	\$0	\$0	\$108,315
41	Wayne	\$47,500	\$19,607	\$13,200	\$0	\$80,307
42	Wilson	\$8,735	\$1,772	\$4,789	\$42,357	\$57,653
	Total	\$1,347,024	\$243,286	\$466,445	\$181,892	\$2,238,647
		61%	11%	20%	8%	100%

IMPACT ON JUVENILE COURT

In addition to the juvenile defendants admitted for participation in Teen Court last year, there were an additional youth volunteers, as well as adult volunteers who spent time assisting in the implementation of these services. Young people learned about the operating procedures of the court system and were exposed to adult professionals in the judicial system and law enforcement. The relationships developed had lasting effects among the youth served by the teen court programs as well as the youth volunteers. The exposure to the court system empowered youth with the understanding and familiarity with the processes of juvenile courts and the roles and responsibility of all involved.

Another measurable impact of the program is the diversion of youth from juvenile court. In the counties operating programs during, Teen Court provided a community resource for youth that prevented referrals to juvenile court. Teen Court served as an intake diversion for of these clients who had court complaints.

Teen Court allows the system to respond proactively and compassionately to juveniles at the first instance of problem behavior. It undercuts the permissive message that is often inadvertently sent when minor offenses lead to essentially "no response" from a system over-burdened with more serious offenders. The combined effect of this "first response" that requires accountability, community services and interaction with victims is laying import groundwork that will reduce the escalation of delinquent behaviors for many teens being impacted by this program.