



Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

Teen Court

**Annual Report
Fiscal Year 2006-2007
Submitted March 2008**

Executive Summary

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 by providing a 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.

Teen Court programs are a restorative justice program option that county Juvenile Crime Prevention Councils (JCPC) may fund in order to meet the county's prevention and intervention service needs. As a result of an annual planning process, the JCPC prioritizes needed services and advertises a request for proposals for agencies to provide the needed services. The county, or the service provider, provide a match for the funds granted by the JCPC.

During fiscal 2006-2007 Juvenile Crime Prevention Councils (JCPC) funded Teen Court programs were operating in 41 counties, providing services to 2,632 juveniles. On average the Teen Court Program costs \$887 per youth with the State's portion being \$528. Support for these programs is demonstrated by the more than \$947,034 contributed from in-kind, local, and other funds. Participants in Teen Court programs paid \$7,913 dollars in restitution, worked over 30,790 hours of Community Service, were required to attend 2093 seminars, and write 977 letters of apology.

The program's long-term goals include:

- Reducing juvenile crime
- Teaching youth to be accountable for their actions
- Developing responsible decision making skills
- Reducing caseloads for Juvenile Court Counselors, Juvenile Courts, and District Court
- Educating youth about the justice system
- Promoting community collaboration
- Strengthening the family
- Promoting long-term behavioral and enhancing public safety

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 a 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. During the 1997 Legislative 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 Legislative 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. Throughout FY 2002-03 these transferred funds were used to support the Teen Court Programs in the previously funded counties. Since 2004, the funding of Teen Court Programs has been a decision of the JCPC funding process and based in the programming needs of the county.

The Teen Court Programs have been incorporated into the ongoing county JCPC process with local support and oversight. Department of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Area Consultants provide technical assistance to JCPCs for Teen Court and other JCPC programming and processes. During FY 2006-07 Teen Court had a total operating budget of \$2,335,487 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 \$1,388,453 which is equal to 59% of the program's operating budget. During FY 2005-06 the Teen Court Operating budget was \$2,238,647. The Department provided \$1,347,024 which was equivalent to 60% of the operating budget. This shift in figures demonstrates a decrease in the amount of State funds and an increase in the contributions at the local level.

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 by providing a hearing by a jury of the juvenile's peers. Teen

Court Programs also serve many other functions. In addition to providing a mechanism for holding youthful delinquents accountable, and educating youth on the legal system, Teen Courts provide an avenue for developing, enhancing, and practicing life skills in an effort to assist 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. And, although youth that are older than 17 can participate in the program if they are currently enrolled in an educational program, the program receives the vast majority of its referrals from Juvenile Court, Law Enforcement, School Resource Officers, and other School Personnel, and Parents. A relatively small number of referrals are received from local District Courts.

The Teen Court model calls for cases to be heard and Dispositions to be made by a jury of juvenile peers. In almost all of the matters referred the juvenile is appearing in response to his/her first Petition and is charged with a Misdemeanor Offenses to which he/she has already admitted guilt. While most juveniles referred to Teen Court are under the age of 16 when they commit their offense. As mentioned previously, Teen Court procedures also allow some Adult District Court cases involving minor youthful offenders to be heard. In all Teen Court proceedings the roles of Defense Attorney, Prosecuting Attorney, Bailiff, Clerk, and jurors are played by student volunteers. During the actual Teen Court sessions the only adult in the court room is the Judge. Judicial volunteers are drawn from the ranks of sitting, or retired, judges and attorneys who have 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 Disposition. All Dispositions 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 comply with other rehabilitative measures 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, the operations of the programs, and on relevant statistical data. Teen Court Programs must comply with the Department's Standards and Policies for JCPC programs.

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 and mock trial competitions and have the opportunity to showcase what they are doing in their respective communities. The most recent Summit was held in April 2007 in Durham and included participants from across North Carolina.

The Association also sponsors an Annual Conference in which Providers receive training on a variety of topics related to programming for youth. The conference also allows the programs to receive updates on standards, operating procedures, and Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention policies.

The Teen Court Summit, and the Annual Conference, 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 Summit and Conference, the Association meets regularly to discuss programming, strategic planning, and funding challenges.

Table I
Teen Court Annual Summary
Fiscal Year 2006-2007

1. Referrals received	2,974	a) Not accepted	213
		b) Not screened	129
2. Accepted for participation	2,632		
3. Total Volunteers	5,422	a) Students	4,545
		b) Adults	877
4. Withdrew before hearing	80		
5. Hearings Conducted	2,552		
6. Number of completions	2,213		
a) Successful dispositions	1,966		
b) Terminations for noncompliance	247		
7. Dispositions Ordered			
a) Community service hours ordered	33,003		
b) Restitution ordered	\$9,486		
c) Jury duties ordered	8,732		
d) Educational seminars ordered	2,281		
e) Apology letters	1,137		
f) Essays	930		
8. Dispositions Completed			
a) Community service hours performed	30,794		
b) Restitution paid	\$7,913		
c) Jury duties performed	7,329		
d) Educational seminars attended	2,093		
e) Apology Letters	977		
f) Essays completed	756		
9. Type of offenses heard			
Assault	344	12%	
Affray	586	21%	
Larceny/Poss. Stolen Property	398	15%	
Possession of Weapon not firearm	217	8%	
Disorderly Conduct	206	8%	
Poss. Drugs/paraphernalia	215	8%	
Shoplifting	105	4%	
Property Damage	139	5%	
All Others	510	19%	
Totals	2,720	100%	

**Teen Court Annual Summary
Fiscal Year 2006-2007
(continued)**

10. Referral Source	Number Referred	% of Total Referrals
Juvenile Intake/Court	835	28%
SRO	1,051	35%
Law Enforcement	298	10%
School	70	2%
District Court	571	19%
District Attorney	101	4%
Other	48	2%
Total	2,974	100%

11. Demographics of admitted defendants		
RACE		
Black	1,240	49%
White	1,118	44%
Hispanic	148	6%
Other	46	1%
Total	2,552	100%
GENDER		
Male	1,685	66%
Female	867	34%
Total	2,552	100%

12.Sources of Financial Support 2006-07

	County	JCPC \$	LOCAL \$	IN-KIND \$	OTHER \$	TOTAL \$
1	Alamance	\$105,581	\$0	\$37,400	\$0	\$142,981
2	Beaufort	\$26,032	\$2,604	\$2,225	\$0	\$30,861
3	Bladen	\$24,052	\$100	\$2,655	\$0	\$26,807
4	Brunswick	\$47,415	\$0	\$13,300	\$0	\$60,715
5	Buncombe	\$29,723	\$0	\$27,900	\$0	\$57,623
6	Cabarrus	\$49,328	\$3,000	\$47,954	\$17,146	\$117,428
7	Camden	\$1,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,500
8	Carteret	\$45,055	\$0	\$22,442	\$0	\$67,497
9	Caswell	\$9,036	\$2,721	\$0	\$5,944	\$17,701
10	Chatham	\$23,494	\$6,269	\$3,800	\$0	\$33,563
11	Chowan	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,165	\$1,165
12	Columbus	\$37,919	\$0	\$8,000	\$0	\$45,919
13	Craven	\$12,000	\$30,000	\$8,000	\$33,197	\$83,197
14	Cumberland	\$59,449	\$14,641	\$17,136	\$0	\$91,226
15	Currituck	\$14,922	\$4,477	\$0	\$0	\$19,399
16	Duplin	\$25,000	\$0	\$2,500	\$0	\$27,500
17	Durham	\$160,000	\$35,000	\$19,887	\$30,559	\$245,446
18	Edgecombe	\$15,146	\$1,515	\$0	\$40,303	\$56,964
19	Forsyth	\$35,330	\$39,775	\$10,000	\$0	\$85,105
20	Gaston	\$36,052	\$7,210	\$86,271	\$0	\$129,533
21	Gates	\$12,333	\$2,088	\$3,767	\$0	\$18,188
22	Greene	\$5,765	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,765
23	Guilford	\$65,000	\$32,042	\$5,300	\$12,709	\$115,051
24	Lenoir	\$31,400	\$30	\$7,952	\$0	\$39,382
25	Moore	\$35,200	\$5,464	\$18,260	\$0	\$58,924
26	Nash	\$20,000	\$14,000	\$0	\$22,381	\$56,381
27	New Hano	\$35,694	\$0	\$7,600	\$0	\$43,294
28	Onslow	\$18,983	\$10,082	\$1,226	\$569	\$30,860
29	Orange	\$32,000	\$2,366	\$0	\$8,548	\$42,914
30	Pasquotank	\$13,000	\$1,300	\$0	\$0	\$14,300
31	Pender	\$11,000	\$0	\$4,000	\$0	\$15,000
32	Perquimas	\$8,450	\$0	\$845	\$0	\$9,295
33	Person	\$33,800	\$8,450	\$0	\$0	\$42,250
34	Pitt	\$54,369	\$1,221	\$15,535	\$0	\$71,125
35	Rockingham	\$35,672	\$1,500	\$504	\$0	\$37,676
36	Rowan	\$33,399	\$0	\$14,374	\$0	\$47,773
37	Sampson	\$28,000	\$800	\$5,250	\$0	\$34,050
38	Wake	\$116,806	\$35,042	\$0	\$0	\$151,848
39	Washington	\$3,659	\$366	\$12,073	\$0	\$16,098
40	Wayne	\$28,133	\$20,607	\$12,580	\$0	\$61,320
41	Wilson	\$8,756	\$1,751	\$23,178	\$48,178	\$81,863
	Total	\$1,388,453	\$284,421	\$441,914	\$220,699	\$2,335,487

Statistical Comparison

Table II examines the growth of the Teen Court program by comparing fiscal year 2006-07 to previous years.

Table II

Measure	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
# of Programs	48	42	41
Referrals	3126	3029	2974
Admissions	2743	2701	2632
% Served	88%	89%	89%
Most Common Offenses	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Affrays	25%	18%	21%
Larc/Poss Stolen Pro	17%	15%	15%
Assault	12%	20%	12%
Drug/Paraphernalia	8%	9%	8%
Weapon (not firearm)	6%	9%	8%
Shoplifting	5%	5%	4%
Property Damage	4%	4%	5%
Disorderly Conduct	9%	9%	8%
All Others	13%	11%	19%
Total	100%	100%	100%
Results Arising from Teen Court Dispositions	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Community Service Hours Performed	38,643	37,131	30,794
Restitution Paid	\$3,740	\$5,031	\$7,913
Jury Duties Performed	7,450	7,573	7,329
Educational Seminars Attended	2,186	1,709	2,093
Apology Letters Written	1,080	938	977
Essays Written	860	710	756

The statistical comparison in Table II above suggests the following in regards to services: Services to youth with reported involvement in affrays and charged with property damage have increased, while services to youth involved with assaults, drugs/paraphernalia and weapon possession have decreased. Services to youth involved with larceny and possession of stolen property have maintained the same level as the previous year. Court Dispositions resulted in \$7,913 being collected in Restitution, 7,329 jury duties being performed, and more than 5,422 adult and youth volunteers being involved in program operations. The amount of funds collected for Restitution increased from the previous fiscal year (2005-2006) by over \$2,880.

IMPACT ON JUVENILE COURT

Among the most measurable impacts of the Teen Court program is the diversion of youth from juvenile court. In the 41 counties operating Teen Court programs during 2006-07, these programs provided a community resource for youth that prevented 2,974 referrals to Juvenile Court. Teen Court served as an Intake and Juvenile Court Diversion for 835 of the clients who had official Complaints filed against them.

In addition to the juvenile defendants admitted for participation in Teen Court last year, there were 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. Exposure to the court system empowered the involved youth with the understanding of, and familiarity with, the processes of Juvenile Courts and the professional roles and responsibilities of all system related personnel.

Teen Court continues to allow the North Carolina Juvenile Justice System to respond proactively and compassionately to youth with need at the first occasion of problem behavior. The combined effect of this "first response" is that it requires accountability, community services, and interaction with victims. These actions lay an important groundwork for responsibility that will reduce the escalation of delinquent behaviors for many of the teens being impacted by this helpful and valued program.