

What are Teen Court sentences like?

- ◆ You have two months to finish
- ◆ You will be required to do between 1-4 assignments
- ◆ The minimum sentence for everyone is to serve three times on other Teen Court juries
- ◆ Other parts of your sentence might be about drug and alcohol awareness, personal growth, job or education goals, restitution, family relationships, or a creative assignment

What Else?

- ◆ We have a carpool option from the B&GCR Teen Center and Eureka High School
- ◆ You automatically become a member of the Boys & Girls Club
- ◆ Teen Center has monthly Family Dinner Nights

What happens when I finish?

Once you have finished the requirements of your sentence and turned in all your signatures and assignments, Teen Court will notify the official who referred you that you have completed. If you have been referred from Arcata Police Diversion, your charges are dismissed once all your other requirements are complete. If you have been referred from probation, your requirements have been fulfilled. If referred from school, you have avoided suspension or expulsion.

How can I volunteer?

Eligible volunteers:

- ◆ Are in the 8th-12th grades
- ◆ Have a desire to help other youth
- ◆ Complete a group training with Teen Court, which happen in the fall and spring. Or visit our website to get started through an Orientation Video.
- ◆ If you come to Teen Court as a participant, you can continue volunteering as soon as your sentence is complete.

Adult Mentor Attorneys

We need adult attorneys who like working with youth to volunteer as mentors. Please contact us if you are interested.

What do participants say?

“I like that Teen Court gives you a sentence you can benefit from.”

“I was ashamed to say to everyone that I was wrong, but it made a difference.”

“Teen Court provides great experience in not only knowledge of the courtroom and how trials run, but public speaking, debate and handling real live cases with real people. It helps the defendant take his/her actions seriously and not want to commit a crime again.”



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What is Teen Court?

Teen Court is an innovative diversion program for first-time juvenile offenders. It is a real court that is run entirely by teen volunteers. We organize around youth empowerment and restorative justice. We have two court processes. The Eureka courthouse hearings have teens serving in the roles of jury, attorney, clerk and judge, with an adult mentor judge and attorneys providing guidance.

We also hold **Jury Councils**, which involve a handful of teens who sit and listen to the case and come up with an appropriate sentence along with the client. In Jury Councils there are no student attorneys or judges, just a jury of peers.

In both processes, the teen jury focuses on coming up with a restorative sentence that will help the offender to repair harms and learn from their mistake. These courts are designed to empower youth, promote accountability, provide access to youth resources, and model peer leadership. Teen Courts have succeeded in hundreds of communities across the country because they offer an important educational opportunity for young people to learn about how the justice system works and put civics into practice.

Teen Court is a collaborative program involving the Humboldt County Probation Department, the Humboldt County Superior Court, local police departments and schools, and other community service entities.



Leadership

Teen Court also offers a **leadership** program for those who want to volunteer on a weekly basis. Leaders work on court improvements, recruiting and training new volunteers, receive advanced training, make presentations in the community and go on field trips

When and Where is Court?

- ◆ First and third Thursday of each month from 4:15-6:15 p.m.
- ◆ Humboldt County Courthouse (825 5th Street, Eureka), Second Floor
- ◆ Jury Councils are held at Eureka High School on a Tuesday or Wednesday
- ◆ Call Teen Court to confirm dates

Is Teen Court voluntary?

Teen Court is an alternative to the regular juvenile justice system. Youth who are offered diversion can choose between Teen Court or other consequences (such as probation).

What should a participant expect at court?

Arrive at the courthouse at 4:15 pm. You may have to wait before you get called in.

Court takes place in a real courtroom and is overseen by an adult mentor judge. Wear nice, respectful clothes and please call the judge “your honor”).

A trained student attorney will represent you at court, and another student attorney will represent the community and any victims. You will be expected to get up on witness stand and answer questions by both attorneys, the jury, and the judge.

After hearing the facts of the case and learning about you, the jury will go into another room and decide on your sentence.



What is restorative justice?

Restorative justice is a different approach to accountability than the regular court system. Restorative justice includes the following elements:

- ◆ Storytelling by the offender, victim and community
- ◆ Rebuilding relationships, rather than focusing on the laws broken
- ◆ Collaboration between the offender and teen volunteers to come up with a solution and appropriate consequences
- ◆ Meeting the needs of victims and anyone harmed by the crime, with the goal of strengthening the community
- ◆ The opportunity to show remorse, take responsibility, be accountable, and participate in repairing harm
- ◆ Developing character by building skills in youth that help them leave the program with better resources