

Parker Teen Court

*Frequently asked questions
about this unique program for
first-time juvenile offenders.*

Offenses eligible for Teen Court:

Teen Court sees cases involving:

- Possession of alcohol
- Possession of drug paraphernalia
- Possession of cannabis
- Shoplifting/petty theft
- Destruction of property
- Curfew/Running from Officers
- Disturbing the peace
- Throwing missiles
- Other youth-related offenses

Defendant eligibility

You are or may be eligible for Teen Court if:

- This is your first offense
- You are 12-17 years old



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20120 E. Mainstreet
Parker, CO 80138
VOICE 303.805.3171
EMAIL court@parkeronline.org
WEB www.ParkerOnline.org/TeenCourt

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Mission: *Reducing juvenile crime by expanding the quality of youth and juvenile justice through positive peer influence and striving to achieve results that exceed the expectations of our community*

History of Parker Teen Court

The Parker Teen Court was formed in January 2005. The Municipal Court was searching for a unique way to deal with youth offenders in Parker. When the program was first advertised, there was a tremendous response from the teens in the community who wanted to volunteer. The Teen Court handles approximately 60-65 cases annually.

Teen Court volunteers also participate in activities outside of the court, including fun movie nights, banquets, ice cream socials and reaching out to the community through community service.

The feedback we receive from parents and defendants has been very positive. Since the beginning of the program, some individuals who went through Teen Court as defendants have returned to become active members.

Program overview

Teen Court is a community-based, juvenile intervention/prevention program that offers an alternative to the juvenile justice system. This program only accepts juvenile offenders with first-time, nonviolent, misdemeanor charges. These offenders are seen by youth volunteers who act as peer mentors, attorneys, bailiffs and jurors. Our trained teens conduct peer panels and trials before they determine the appropriate sanctions for the offender. The offender takes responsibility for their actions, are honest with the Teen Court volunteers and understands how their behavior affects the Town of Parker.

Teen Court may be right for you if you want to:

- Be sentenced by a jury of your peers, rather than by an adult judge
- Present witnesses and evidence at your court hearing

You should consider that Teen Court:

- Asks you to return to be sentenced on a separate evening 2-4 weeks after your original court date
- Requires that a parent/legal guardian appears with you
- Gives sentences that may be lighter or harsher than one given by the judge
- Necessitates that you give up your right to have an adult attorney try your case

Sentencing information:

Sentences are constructed by the jury to fit the specific defendant and his/her offense. Mandatory sentences include a minimum of eight community service hours and serving as a juror for at least one court session.

Community service: ALL defendants will receive between 8 to 40 hours of community service that must be completed at a non-profit charitable organization.

Classes: Juries can also sentence defendants to attend a one-day class related to his/her offense. These classes include topics such as anger management, petty theft or substance abuse education, and empowerment.

Apology letters: The defendant may also be required to write letters of apology to the victim.

Other: Any other appropriate learning experience may be implemented as part of a sentence.

Program process:

- The coordinator mails a letter of eligibility to the defendant and his/her parent(s). If the defendant does not receive a letter, parents can request that a case be reviewed for eligibility.
- The defendant chooses Teen Court, takes full responsibility for their involvement in the incident and accepts a deferred prosecution agreement.
- The coordinator sets the hearing date for a trial or peer panel.
- If the case is peer panel, the defendant and his/her parent(s) will appear and have a conversation with the panel to determine an appropriate sentence.
- If the case is a trial, the teen attorneys prepare the case and later present the case to a teen jury at a trial where the defendant is present along with at least one parent. Teen attorneys present the case to a teen jury.
- After trial proceedings, the jury deliberates and creates a sentence for the defendant.
- The defendant reviews the sentencing requirements and agrees to complete the conditions within the allotted time.
- Jury panels may be completed for community service hours, when applicable.
- If the defendant completes their sentence on time, the case is dismissed after the deferred prosecution date.
- If the defendant fails to comply and complete their sentence on time, they are sent back to the municipal court judge.