

HISTORY

The Harford County Teen Court was implemented in May, 2010, and is a collaboration between the Harford County Sheriff's Office Community Services Division and the Harford County Office of Drug Control Policy. It is a voluntary diversion program that is used to resolve misdemeanor offenses without requiring intervention by the Department of Juvenile Services.

The idea of Teen Court is based on two principles: everyone has a right to be judged by a group of his or her peers, and people deserve a chance to make up for their mistakes. These diversion programs teach responsibility while restoring a sense of safety in the community.



For more information, please contact
Harford County Teen Court
410-638-3045
teencourt@harfordcountymd.gov
www.harfordcountymd.gov/498/Teen-Court



**Harford County Housing
and Community Services**

A promotional banner for Harford County Teen Court. It features the text 'HARFORD COUNTY TEEN COURT' at the top. Below that is a group of five diverse teenagers (three girls and two boys) holding a large white sign that says 'TEENS HELPING TEENS' in orange. At the bottom is a gold justice scale and a wooden gavel on a wooden surface, with bookshelves in the background.



**Harford County Housing
and Community Services**

Bob Cassilly, Harford County Executive

WHAT IS TEEN COURT?

Harford County Teen Court is a voluntary diversion program used to resolve misdemeanor offenses for youths 13-17 without requiring intervention by the Department of Juvenile Services. Youth who successfully complete the program avoid a juvenile record for their offense while focusing on accountability and development.



MISSION

To provide youth with a first-time misdemeanor an opportunity to restore relationships within their communities and provide them the resources to improve future decision making.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR TEEN COURT?

Cases are referred by local law enforcement.

To be eligible, the youth must:

- Be between the ages of 13-17
- Be a first-time offender
- Be charged in Harford County
- Admit their guilt

The youth will explain the incident in his/her own words at an initial meeting. The coordinator will then determine eligibility for a Teen Court hearing.

HOW IT WORKS

A Teen Court hearing is held with a jury of the participant's peers who are local volunteer teens. Jurors ask the youth questions to understand the incident and assist with determining appropriate sanctions. The jury then deliberates privately to decide what sanctions the youth offender should be given. Sanctions may include:

- Community service;
- Teen Court jury duty;
- Composing an essay;
- Attending anger management or educational programs;
- Counseling; or
- Other creative sanctions.

Harford County District Court judges preside over all of the Teen Court cases and approve recommended sanctions.

HOW CAN I VOLUNTEER?

Volunteers can earn three service learning hours each session. The teen jury consists of students ages 13-17 who reside in Harford County or attend a Harford County Public School. Adult volunteers act as guides for the teen jury.

Some jurors are strictly volunteers and others may have been past participants who have received jury duty as a sanction.

Volunteers are expected to maintain confidentiality about what they observe in court at all times. Trainings are held twice a year for new volunteers. Applications are available at www.harfordcountymd.gov/498/Teen-Court.



**Questions? Please contact the Harford County Teen Court at
410-638-3045 or visit www.harfordcountymd.gov/498/Teen-Court**