

Volunteers needed

Juvenile arbitration is reliant on citizen volunteers who act as arbitrators and mentors. They conduct the hearings and monitor the juvenile's progress.

We will train the volunteers in the following areas:

- Juvenile criminal justice
- Criminal law
- Communication skills
- Hearing format and technique

Once the arbitrator has completed the requirements and has been approved by the court, the volunteer will typically be assigned one case per month. Combined with follow-ups on previous hearings, the total time commitment is approximately eight hours per month.

If you are interested, please contact the program director listed on the back of this brochure.

Program Mission Statement

“Reaching our youth of today so tomorrow will be possible”



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Solicitor Duffie Stone

Juvenile Arbitration Program



Program Overview

State of South Carolina
OFFICE OF THE SOLICITOR
Isaac McDuffie Stone, III, Solicitor
FOURTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

(803) 914-2182

Program Overview

The Juvenile Arbitration Program has been in place locally since 1998. Patterned after successful programs throughout the country, between 250 and 300 juveniles are served by the program annually. Of those, less than 10 percent re-offend.

The purpose of the program is to divert the cases of first-time, non-violent offenders to an alternative venue where their family, the crime victim and other members of the community can work together to address the juvenile's actions and put them back on a better, more productive trajectory.

Specific Objectives:

- Hold the juvenile accountable by installing appropriate sanctions and punishments that address the crime
- Repay the crime victim to compensate them for any losses
- Allow the community to play an active role in the juvenile justice system by coming together to determine the appropriate outcome of the case
- Connect the juveniles to positive influences so they will make better choices
- Enable first-time, juveniles offenders who successfully complete the program to clear their records so they may go on to be successful in school and careers.

ENROLLMENT

When a juvenile is charged with a minor offense, the arresting officer may refer the cases to our office with a recommendation that juvenile arbitration be considered. Additionally, juveniles may be referred to the program after their cases are reviewed by Family Court prosecutors.

The program director will then schedule a hearing date and inform the:

- Juvenile and his/her parents
- Victim
- Arresting officer

This is a voluntary program. At any point, a juvenile or the juvenile's family may terminate participation in the program. If that occurs, the case will be sent back to Family Court for prosecution.

THE HEARING

During the hearing, a citizen arbitrator interviews all parties to determine the facts of the case.

The group then comes to a consensus about an appropriate course of action that holds the juvenile accountable, makes the victim whole for any losses and puts the juvenile on a path toward success. The program will be tailored to fit the unique circumstances of each case.

REQUIREMENTS

While the specific requirements will be aligned with the unique circumstances of the case, the following elements will be included in every individual's program plan:

- Education: Attending a session of General Sessions Court and a correctional institution to see the consequences of crime.
- Written assignments: Completing an assigned essay and formal letter of apology to the crime victim.
- Restitution: Compensating the victim for his/her losses as much as is practical
- Community service: Performing a certain number of hours to help repay the community.

The arbitrator and program director will monitor the juvenile's progress. If the juvenile is unsuccessful, the case will be forwarded to Family Court for prosecution. If the juvenile is successful, the charges will be dropped.

It typically takes about three months for the juvenile to complete the requirements and have his/her record cleared.