

COMMUNITY JUVENILE/YOUTH ARBITRATION PROGRAM

A Community-Based Youth Crime Intervention Program



Overview

The Community Juvenile/Youth Arbitration Program is a community-based program that provides fast track accountability for first-time youthful offenders charged with committing a nonviolent crime. These youths are diverted from the formal justice system to an arbitration hearing or conference conducted in or near their communities. Trained volunteer arbitrators conduct the hearings/conferences and monitor the youths' progress throughout the program, which is authorized to operate by Solicitor's Offices in all 16 judicial circuits in South Carolina and the Richland County Sheriff's Department.

The three goals of the Arbitration Program are:

- To hold young offenders **accountable** for their actions and for the harm they cause to their victims and communities;
- To increase the **competency** and learning of young offenders so they can become productive, law abiding citizens;
- To ensure **public safety** by strengthening a community's capacity to prevent and control crime.

The Arbitration Program is an excellent example of balanced and restorative justice (BARJ). Citizen volunteers guide the development of common-sense solutions to divert at-risk youths from the justice system.



Program Basics

Participants in the arbitration process include a trained citizen volunteer, the youthful offender and his or her parent(s) or guardian(s), the crime victim, and the arresting officer. The youth's participation is voluntary and requires an admission of facts or guilt. After determining the facts of the case, the arbitrator works with all participants to establish agreeable and appropriate sanctions for the youth to complete, ensuring that he or she repairs the harm caused to his or her victim(s) and community and learns from the experience. These actions may include:

- Paying monetary restitution
- Performing a community service;
- Making a charitable donation;
- Attending educational programs;
- Participating in counseling;
- Writing topical essays;
- Apologizing to the victim(s);
- Attending substance abuse programs;
- Participating in victim impact panels;
- Visiting correctional institutions or making other appropriate field trips.

Successful completion of the Arbitration Program enables the youth to make amends for his or her actions and avoid formal prosecution in court. If the youth does not successfully complete the program, he or she is referred to court for prosecution. The Arbitration Program does not accept violent offenders, previous diversion program participants, or truants and other status offenders.

Program Success

The Juvenile/Youth Arbitration Program has experienced much success across South Carolina and thousands of offenders are diverted from the juvenile justice system each year:

Fiscal Year	# Diverted
2016 -- 2017	3,278
2015 - 2016	3,829
2014 - 2015	3,841
2013 - 2014	4,078
2012 - 2013	4,234

It Takes Volunteers...

The success of the Community Juvenile/Youth Arbitration Program depends on community participation and volunteerism. Volunteer arbitrators are the lifeblood of the program – they come from all walks of life and are the heart and soul of the program. Each volunteer arbitrator must be age 21 and a high school graduate, be screened by the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division and the South Carolina Department of Social Services, approved by the Solicitor's Office or Sheriff's Department, and trained for 21 hours through the Solicitor's Office or Sheriff's Department. Additionally, Volunteer arbitrators must also receive nine (9) hours of follow-up training for each consecutive year of service.

Program History

Modeled after a similar program in Florida, the Juvenile/Youth Arbitration Program in South Carolina began when Lexington County Solicitor Donald V. Myers initiated it in the 11th Judicial Circuit in 1983. This circuit includes Lexington, Saluda, Edgefield, and McCormick counties. After learning of the success of the program in the 11th Circuit, other South Carolina solicitors and family court judges wanted the Arbitration Program implemented in their circuits. The 2nd Judicial Circuit, covering Aiken, Bamberg, and Barnwell counties, became the next circuit to offer the program. Today, Arbitration Programs operate in all 16 judicial circuits, covering 41 counties and one sheriff's department:

- **1st Judicial Circuit** - Calhoun and Orangeburg
- **2nd Judicial Circuit** - Aiken, Bamberg, and Barnwell
- **3rd Judicial Circuit** - Clarendon, Lee, Sumter, and Williamsburg
- **4th Judicial Circuit** - Chesterfield, Darlington, Marlboro, and Dillon
- **5th Judicial Circuit** - Kershaw County and the Richland County Sheriff's Department
- **6th Judicial Circuit** - Chester, Lancaster, Fairfield
- **7th Judicial Circuit** - Cherokee and Spartanburg
- **8th Judicial Circuit** - Abbeville, Greenwood, Laurens, and Newberry
- **9th Judicial Circuit** - Charleston and Berkeley
- **10th Judicial Circuit** - Anderson and Oconee
- **11th Judicial Circuit** - Lexington
- **12th Judicial Circuit** - Florence and Marion
- **13th Judicial Circuit** - Greenville and Pickens
- **14th Judicial Circuit** - Allendale, Hampton, Colleton, Jasper, and Beaufort
- **15th Judicial Circuit** - Horry
- **16th Judicial Circuit** - Union and York

DJJ has been supportive of the Juvenile/Youth Arbitration Program since its inception. The agency currently contributes funds toward the program and serves as the state agency that distributes appropriated funds to each judicial circuit through a contract authorized by each circuit solicitor. In addition, DJJ provides training and technical assistance to all program staff and monitors the progress of the programs in each circuit.

For more information about the Community Juvenile/Youth Arbitration Program please contact:

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For additional DJJ resources please contact your local DJJ County Office (below) or visit our website:
<http://www.state.sc.us/djj/>

DJJ County Offices

Abbeville 864-366-5312	Darlington 843-393-5641	Lexington 803-359-5526
Aiken 803-641-7735	Dillon 843-774-4147	Marion 843-431-1110
Allendale 803-584-4751	Dorchester 843-832-4265	Marlboro 843-479-2961
Anderson 864-260-4041	Fairfield 803-712-6533	Newberry 803-276-8243
Barnwell 803-259-7114	Florence 843-665-3080	Oconee 864-638-9537
Bamberg 803-245-5184	Greenville 864-467-5875	Orangeburg 803-533-6270
Beaufort 843-525-1351	Greenwood 864-229-6648	Pickens 864-878-7560
Berkeley 843-761-8194	Georgetown 843-546-8723	Richland 803-253-4050
Calhoun 803-533-6270	Hampton 803-943-4296	Spartanburg 864-562-4200
Charleston 843-740-1649	Horry 843-915-8969	Sumter 803-778-2368
Cherokee 864-487-2564	Jasper 843-726-5666	Union 864-429-1640
Chester 803-377-8104	Kershaw 803-432-9171	Williamsburg 843-355-2772
Chesterfield 843-623-2378	Lancaster 803-285-9447	York 803-909-7500
Clarendon 803-435-8587	Laurens 864-984-2518	Tri-Counties (Edgefield McCormick Saluda) 864-445-8138
Colleton 843-549-1509	Lee 803-484-4550	

The South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice does not discriminate in any programs or activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age.

THE FOLLOWING OFFICES HAVE BEEN DESIGNATED TO HANDLE INQUIRIES REGARDING THE NONDISCRIMINATION POLICIES:

Title IX - Inspector General's Office - 803-896-9595, Title II & 504 - Special Education Office - 803-896-8484