

What is Youth Court?

Youth Court is a voluntary alternative to the criminal justice system for young people who have committed a crime or an offense. The goal of Youth Court is to intervene in early anti-social, delinquent, and criminal behavior, and to reduce the incidence and prevent the escalation of such behavior. Youth Court strives to promote feelings of self esteem and a desire for self improvement, and to foster a healthy attitude towards rules and authority. Youth Court also offers a law-related education program for young people who seek to become members of the Court.

What Happens In Youth Court?

A youth, who has admitted guilt to a crime or an offense, appears for a sentencing hearing before a jury of peers. The jury is presented with evidence relevant to the sentencing, deliberates, and passes sentence. Sentences typically include community service and counseling, and stress rehabilitative goals.

Youth Court Program Coordinator

Youth Court is supervised and daily operations are overseen by a Coordinator. The Coordinator works with offenders, families, jurors, members, law enforcement agencies, and others in the community to ensure that Youth Court is effective in its mission to be constructive, rehabilitative, and educational. A Community Board assists in the mission and in formulating operational procedure and policy.

For Further Information:

Councilwoman Amy Standaert

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Town of Clifton Park Youth Court

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Town of Clifton Park Youth Court Community Board Members

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Dana Barrett
Shenendehowa High School Student

Steven Bayle
Saratoga County Probation

Linda Campion
Victim Advocate

Pat Campion
Saratoga County Assistant District Attorney

Wes Carr
Saratoga County Youth Bureau Director

Craig Chandler
Shenendehowa High School Assistant Principal

Richard DiCaprio
St. Edward's Deacon

Jim Hughes
Clifton Park Town Justice

Robert Rybak
Clifton Park Town Justice

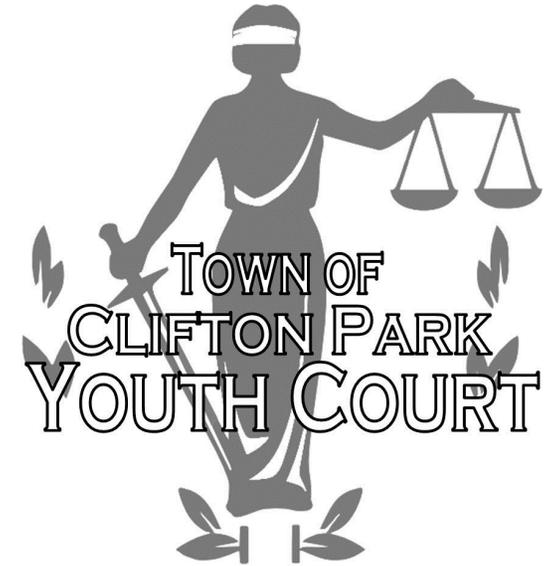
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Tom McCarthy
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Karen Heggen
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Michael Student
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Introduction to the Town of Clifton Park Youth Court



PHIL BARRETT

Supervisor
Town of Clifton Park

LYNDA M. WALOWIT
Councilwoman

JAMES J. ROMANO
Councilman

JAMES M. WHALEN
Councilman

AMY J.H. STANDAERT
Councilwoman



Who Participates In Youth Court Proceedings?

Youth Court Proceedings involve an offender, jurors and members in the roles of judge, prosecutor, defender, clerk/bailiff, jury foreman and victim advocate. Each court room role is performed by students in grades 7-12 who have completed the Youth Court course of instruction. Jurors are not required to complete Youth Court training but may do so with prior approval from the Youth Court Program Coordinator. The offender must complete the sentence imposed by the jury and in addition, must sit as a juror on at least one, and possibly several, cases of other offenders. This is the final component of completion of their peer imposed sentence. All Youth Court cases will be tried at Clifton Park Town Hall in the Wood Room.

What Type Of Cases Are Heard In Youth Court?

Cases are generally referred by judges, police, and probation department to the Program Coordinator who accepts cases that meet established criteria. Typical cases that may be heard in Youth Court include shoplifting, criminal mischief, larceny, and vandalism.

What Does The Jury Decide?

The jury may impose a sentence that includes community service, restitution (monetary or in-kind), and attendance at educational classes. The jury cannot sentence any youth to a detention facility or jail.

Membership Requirements

Members of the Youth Court consist of young people who have successfully completed a law related education training program. Areas of instruction include an overview of the criminal justice system, operation of youth court, the penal law, the consequences of crime, and sentencing issues, including aggravated and mitigating circumstances, rehabilitation as a goal, and the nature and type of evidence that is admissible and probative in sentencing. The training program concludes with mock hearings to prepare members for participation in Youth Court proceedings. Youth Court members will rotate among the following roles:

Membership Applications

If you are interested in becoming a Youth Court member, please fill out an application and send the information into Town Hall.

Applications can be found at

www.cliftonpark.org

Judge: Presides over the sentencing hearing, explains the criminal charge to the jury, instructs the jury on what evidence and factors to consider in determining a sentence, and sentences the offender in accordance with the jury's verdict.

Prosecutor: Represents the interests of the people of the community, investigates the circumstances of the offense and background of the offender, presents evidence at the sentencing hearing, and makes a sentencing recommendation to the jury.

Defender: Represents the interests of the offender, investigates the circumstances of the offense and background of the offender, presents evidence at the sentencing hearing, including mitigating evidence, and makes a sentencing recommendation to the jury.

Victim Advocate: Represents the rights and interest of the victim, is responsible to the needs of the victim, and acts as a liaison between the victim and the Youth Court process.

Jury Foreman: Leads deliberations of the jury, ensures participation of all jurors, and that all appropriate sentencing factors are addressed, mediates disputes among jurors, calls for a vote during deliberations, and announces the jury's verdict.

Clerk: Maintain accurate records of court proceedings, ensure smooth operation of court, and administers oaths.

What Benefits Are Obtained And What Rights Are Waived By Offenders?

By agreeing to proceed in Youth Court, an offender obtains certain benefits, and waives certain rights that otherwise would be attached in traditional criminal justice processing. Benefits include a decision by a jury of your peers aimed at assisting the young person in refraining from criminal conduct, and an opportunity to participate positively in the criminal justice system rather than as an object of the system. Rights waived in Youth Court may include the right to an attorney, to a trial for determination of guilt, and to request a closed proceeding (for young people under age sixteen).

Important Facts!

- Youth Court will not prosecute certain offenses; these are Assaults, Sexual Offenses and some Felonies.
- Youth Court will only prosecute individuals who are less than the age of 19 years old, offenses occurring within the jurisdictional boundaries of the Town of Clifton Park and in situations where the minor admits wrongdoing.