

Youth Court

Youth Court is a diversionary program designed for youthful offenders who plan to enter a plea of guilty. This court provides your child with an opportunity to have his/her case heard before a jury of their peers. Sanctions will include community service and nights of jury duty where they will in turn sit on a jury for another youth's trial.

Successful completion of this program will benefit your child by avoiding a record of formal prosecution in Juvenile Court. Unsuccessful completion will result in the case being turned back over to Juvenile Justice and the State Attorney's Office.

Please note: All fees vary depending upon charge and must be paid in full by **money order** prior to the youth's assigned court date.

Please make the money order out to: H.C.B.O.C.C. (Hernando County Board of County Commissioners).

Youth Court is held every Monday Evening at 5:00 PM.

ATTIRE MUST BE APPROPRIATE FOR COURT. SHORTS ARE NOT ALLOWED IN THE COURTROOM. SHIRTS MAY NOT BE SLEEVELESS OR HAVE ANY WRITING, SLOGANS OR LOGOS AND MUST BE ABLE TO BE TUCKED INTO PANTS OR SKIRT. NO HATS, SKULL CAPS, DO RAGS OR BANDANAS ARE TO BE WORN.



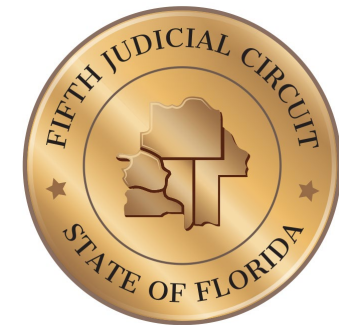
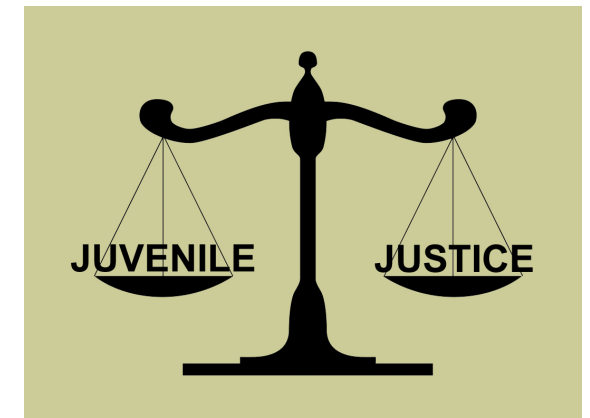
Hernando County Youth Court

20 N. Main Street
Brooksville, FL, 34601
Phone: (352) 540-6263
Fax: (352) 754-4235
Cell: (352) 651-3144
E-mail: sfelten@circuit5.org
Website: <https://www.circuit5.org/programs-services/teen-court-programs/hernado-county-youth-court/>

If you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation, you are entitled, at no cost to you, the provision of certain assistance. Contact Shana Felten by telephone (352) 540-6263.

If you are hearing or voice impaired, call 1-800-955-8771, or email sfelten@circuit5.org.

HERNANDO COUNTY YOUTH COURT



Shana Felten
Hernando County Youth Court Case Manager



YOUTH COURT

The Purpose of Youth Court

The purpose of Youth Court is to interrupt the developing pattern of criminal behavior in juveniles by promoting self-esteem, providing motivation for self-improvement, and instilling a healthy attitude toward authority. The offenders assume responsibility for their behavior and accept the consequences of their actions through community service work, serving on the Youth Court jury, and any punishment sanctioned by a Youth Court jury of their peers.

Youth Court provides an educational experience for the offender and juvenile volunteers. They are given "hands-on" experience with the legal process, become familiar with the Court system, and learn about various career opportunities the Court system has to offer. The offenders also learn about various career opportunities through the community service they perform.

Youth Court provides young people with a unique challenge and enables them to have the opportunity to demonstrate to adults and themselves their capacity for self-government and responsible citizenship.

How Does Youth Court Work?

Cases heard in Youth Court are crimes such as shoplifting, possession of alcohol, criminal mischief, and many other misdemeanor offenses. Sources of referral are law enforcement, Department of Juvenile Justice, and the State Attorney's Office.

The juvenile offender comes before Youth Court having acknowledged guilt. The offender and their parent/guardian meet with the Youth Court Coordinator for a pretrial interview to go over the rules and guidelines of the program. Once the juvenile has been accepted into the program, a Waiver of Speedy Trial is signed.

In the Court session, after the Youth Court Clerk calls the case the Judge explains the offense committed. Then, either a Grand Jury directly questions the Defendant or defense, and prosecution attorneys present the case to the Youth Court Jury. Both utilize the testimony of the offender, the incident report and a pretrial information sheet compiled by the Coordinator. After carefully listening to the facts, the Youth Court Jury deliberates the case and decides a constructive sentence for the offender

The offender and their parent/guardian then meet with the Coordinator to sign a contract to complete the sentence they have received from the Jury. Once the offender completes their sentence a Successful Completion report is sent to the State Attorney's Office, Department of Juvenile Justice, and the referring agency. If the offender does not complete their sentence or rejects the Youth Court Jury sentence, then their case is returned to the appropriate referral source for prosecution.



What is Youth Court?

Youth Court is a program run by our youth for our youth. Juvenile offenders, between the ages of 10 and 17, who have committed a misdemeanor crime, to have their cases heard by a jury of their peers. They perform the roles of prosecuting and defense attorneys, bailiff, clerk, and jury. Typically, a local judge or attorney presides over the hearings.

Requirements for Youth Court Volunteers

- ❖ Must be between the ages of 10 and 17
- ❖ Must abide by the rules of the program
- ❖ Must sign and respect the "Oath of Confidentiality".
- ❖ Must demonstrate maturity and sensitivity.

Student volunteers interested in serving as jurors, prosecutors, defense attorneys, bailiffs, and clerks are always needed. Training sessions are scheduled periodically throughout the year.

Contact Us:

Hernando County Youth Court
20 N. Main Street, Room 300A
Brooksville, FL, 34601

Shana Felten: Phone (352) 540-6263
E-mail: sfelten@circuit5.org