
What is TEEN COURT?

Teen Court is a nationally recognized program of early intervention and restorative justice for juveniles (ages 12-18). It is a diversionary court that keeps first time teen offenders with traffic infractions and misdemeanor offenses out of the traditional court system. They plead guilty, appear before a jury of their peers, and are sentenced. Juveniles brought before Teen Court must accept responsibility for their actions. They face consequences that help them to learn from their mistakes and make amends for the acts they committed. The sanctions are determined by the Teen Court jury, and usually include community service and jury duty at a future Teen Court hearing. Also possible are sanctions like essays, letters of apology, educational programs, gender specific programs, and substance abuse prevention workshops.

Top 10 Reasons To Serve On Teen Court:

10. Help other teens in Los Alamos to learn from their mistakes.
9. Meet local judges and attorneys.
8. Learn about how the legal system works.
7. Have a positive impact on your community.
6. Ensure that your peers get fair sentences.
5. Get a head start on a career in law or law enforcement.
4. Understand more about your fellow students.
3. Perform a valuable community service (and have something notable to include on your college application).
2. Gain self-confidence and practice public speaking by becoming a Teen Court attorney.

And the number one reason is:

We need your help!

Apply to become a Teen Court Volunteer. Contact the Los Alamos Teen Court for more information.

Los Alamos Teen Court
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Los Alamos **TEEN** **COURT**



*Uniquely Impacting Youth in
our Community*

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Who Benefits from Teen Court?

Teen offenders benefit because they are given a unique opportunity to be exposed to positive peer influence. In Teen Court, juveniles learn how other teens feel about the offense that was committed, and they face consequences that are directly related to the infraction. When the offender has complied with all Teen Court requirements, the original charges can often be dismissed.

The community benefits because this early intervention can improve teen attitudes toward authority, increase communication between parents and teens, and prevent teens from re-offending or from graduating to more serious crimes. The Teen Court program is of low cost to the community because it relies heavily on volunteers, yet it has been shown to be as effective or even more effective than traditional juvenile justice systems in reducing the rates of recidivism. †

† **The Impact of Teen Court on Young Offenders** is a national study published in 2002 by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the Urban Institute.

Here's How It Works:

After a traffic citation, arrest, or diversion citation, cases can be referred to the Los Alamos Teen Court (LATC) by the courts or by the Juvenile Probation Office.

Hearings for LATC take place once or twice per month, typically on Thursday afternoons, after school. The LATC is comprised of an adult or teen judge, a teen defense attorney and prosecutor for each case, and a jury comprised of approximately seven teen volunteers and/or former LATC defendants. Hearings are usually held in the Los Alamos Municipal Courtroom, 475 20th Street.

Parental consent and participation are required, and the teen offender must admit guilt and agree to comply with Teen Court sanctions. If the defendant and/or parent choose not to go through Teen Court, the case will go back to the referring source to be handled by other means.

Referrals to LATC can come from the Municipal Court, the Magistrate Court, the Juvenile Parole and Probation Office, the Los Alamos Police Department, and from the Los Alamos middle and high schools.

Los Alamos Middle School and Los Alamos High School students are eligible to volunteer. They receive training in Teen Court procedure, and are given guidelines for sentencing.

Everyone in Teen Court must dress appropriately and show respect for the court. Cell phones are not allowed during hearings.



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