



# National Youth Court Center POLICY BRIEF

SEPTEMBER 2003

## — Youth Court — A Path to Civic Engagement

By Sarah S. Pearson

To build an informed and effective citizenry, prepared to deal with the crises of everyday life, more schools, local and state governments, and communities are searching for ways to provide civic engagement programming for youth. President George W. Bush (2002) has issued a call to all American citizens to provide two years or 4,000 hours of service over a lifetime to “create a nation of active and engaged citizens.” Youth courts, also known as teen courts or peer courts, play a critical role in supporting the call. The program, operating in 78 jurisdictions nationwide in 1994, has risen to approximately 900 sites in 46 states and the District of Columbia in 2003. This 1,000% increase in nine years warrants a closer look at a once small and obscure crime prevention program. Easily established and low-cost, a youth court program gives first-time youth offenders an important second chance while it teaches them about civic participation and the justice process, and engages youth directly in community-based crime prevention. The average cost of running a local youth court

program has been estimated at \$39,000 per year (National Youth Court Center, 2003). This low cost can be attributed to the service of adult and youth volunteers, including attorneys and judges in the community, utilized as an integral part of the program.

It is important to the health of our nation that action is taken to increase opportunities for youth to learn how to be responsible citizens. The freedom and privilege provided by a safe and well-cared-for community depend in part on how well we prepare our younger citizens to make sound and thoughtful judgments regarding the communities in which they live. But where do youth receive guidance in the development of skills, behaviors, principles, and values of democracy? And what does it mean to be a good citizen — both responsible and law-abiding? These skills and youth development experiences escape some young people, leaving them unprepared to become effective, participatory citizens and, in some cases, prone to getting into trouble with the law. Youth court allows youth to work with their peers to deal with crime in

an environment where they take on significant responsibility and learn about the connection between law-violating behavior and consequences.

### What Is Youth Court?

Youth courts inform and educate youth about the role of law in our democracy and about their role as active citizens (Nessel, 2000). Youth court has been in existence for over fifty years (Godwin, Heward, and Spina, 2000), and continues to grow and gain support in communities, districts, and states across the nation.

Youth court is a youth-driven, voluntary alternative to court and school disciplinary proceedings handled through the traditional juvenile court and school systems. Most youth courts require an admission of guilt and function as a sentencing hearing only; however, a small number will allow offenders to plead not guilty. Depending on the program model used, proceedings involve a youth offender and may involve youth volunteers as jurors, judges, prosecutors, defenders, clerks, and bailiff. Youth

court cases are generally referred by judges, police, probation officers, and schools. Cases heard can include larceny, criminal mischief, vandalism, minor assault, possession of alcohol, minor drug offenses, truancy, and other status offenses and non-violent misdemeanor offenses. Youth courts are operated by schools, police departments, probation departments, juvenile and family courts, and community agencies. In many cases, they operate as a joint venture among several

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agencies within the community. Youth involved in the program learn about due process, balanced and restorative justice, and the benefits of volunteering to improve themselves and the community. Through the youth court process, offenders (i.e., respondents) do more than make up for their misdeeds; they have a chance to learn deeper lessons about their role in the community as they engage in constructive sentences, such as community service, youth court jury duty, and educational workshops, which are imposed by their peers.

### **What Does Youth Court Offer Youth Volunteers Who Take on Roles in the Courtroom?**

Youth volunteers serving in important roles in the court process use critical thinking and persuasion skills to prosecute and defend their peer clients. Volunteers engage in considerable training in preparation to prosecute and defend peer clients. They take on the responsibility of counseling their peers and serve as positive role models and mentors. Caring, thought-provoking, and authentic sanctions are deliberated and are as-

signed to offenders by peer juries demonstrating a concern for victims, the community, and the offender's interests and future development. Problem-solving and peer mediation skills practiced during the youth court process provide both volunteers and respondents with helpful skills for the future.

Youth court programs put civic education to practice by helping youth see the cause and effect of their actions on the world around them.

Through the experiential learning offered in youth court programs, teens and adolescents observe how crime takes away from the community

and are challenged to constructively contribute their time, talent, and energy to give back to the community. By serving in important and authentic courtroom roles and providing a variety of services to the community, youth learn important leadership and civic engagement skills that prepare them for adult responsibilities.

### **Why Do We Need Youth Court?**

The kind of education and service provided by youth court is more important than ever. A recent report by the Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement and the Carnegie Corporation of New York (2003) reveals that "increasing numbers of Americans have disengaged from civic and political institutions such as voluntary associations, religious congregations, community-based organizations, and political and electoral activities such as voting and being informed about public issues (p. 4)." The report goes on to say that young people reflect these trends. "...They are less likely to vote and are less interested in political discussion and public issues than either their older counterparts or young people of past decades (p. 4)." This profile

hardly describes a generation that can be relied upon to serve as judicious jurors, informed voters, responsible drivers, compassionate volunteers, or concerned citizens — the very fiber of our communities. Youth court plays an important role in reversing this trend by engaging youth as stakeholders in important issues that affect their peers and community and by providing opportunities to directly experience what it feels like to be viably engaged citizens, making a difference in their communities.

### **What Does the Public Think?**

In 1999, Dr. Jeffrey Butts, a researcher with the Urban Institute, released a report that described his study of the public's perception of juvenile crime, revealing that some public concern is based on inaccurate perceptions of who is responsible for violence in America. He noted that federal and state legislators reacted to the public's perception, passing stricter juvenile crime laws and sending more youth to criminal court. State legislators de-emphasized the juvenile court's mission of intervention and rehabilitation and shifted to the retribution model used in the adult criminal justice system. These policies continue to send thousands of juveniles to criminal court today. Butts suggested that current arrangements for dealing with violent young adults "are in need of repair, especially now that the adult justice system is responsible for a larger proportion of all violent young people, including thousands of young offenders once defined as juveniles. In order to address the nation's violence problem more fully, the justice system as a whole should be working to create new and effective approaches to intervening with youth in general." Youth court reaches youth early, before they learn how to become better criminals. By taking the initiative to reach youth before they become engulfed in a culture of criminal behavior as adults, districts and states can

save thousands and perhaps millions of dollars. It is difficult to ignore the logic that a youth reached today will be more valuable to the community tomorrow.

In a *Juvenile Justice Bulletin* in October 2000, Butts and Buck reported the results of their nationwide research on teen court. The findings from the field indicate that teen courts enjoy broad community support. There are high levels of satisfaction reported among parents, teachers, and youth involved in teen courts. In light of the encouraging results from a number of studies, they noted that little research has been conducted on outcomes for teen court respondents. Several studies covered in the report suggest that teen courts have other effects on youth beyond reduced recidivism. Potential benefits are listed as (1) client satisfaction with the teen court experience, (2) enhanced perceptions of procedural justice, (3) improved attitudes toward authority, (4) greater knowledge of the legal system, (5) increased capacity for making more thoughtful decisions, and (6) improved grades in school.

A national evaluation released in 2002, also conducted by the Urban Institute and funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, suggested that teen court may be a viable alternative to the typical justice process, especially in jurisdictions that are unable to provide extensive interventions for young, first-time juvenile offenders. The report went on to state that “the fact that teen courts operate with largely volunteer labor and very low budgets suggest that they may be a particularly cost-effective alternative for some juvenile offenders (p. 34).” The Urban Institute’s evaluation reported that:

- ✓ Recidivism is low among teen court cases partly due to factors existing before teen court.
- ✓ Teen court may be a viable option for cases not likely to receive meaningful sanctions from the juvenile justice system.

- ✓ Client satisfaction is very high among youth and parents, even after teen court sanctioning.
- ✓ No clear evidence suggests that one courtroom model is best, but youth-run models deserve wider consideration.<sup>1</sup>

For more information on the evaluation, please visit [www.urban.org](http://www.urban.org).

### Is There a National Resource for Youth Court?

The National Youth Court Center, created by the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Transportation and operated by the American Probation and Parole Association, serves as an information clearinghouse for state youth court agencies and local youth court programs and provides training and technical assistance on the operating procedures required for a quality youth court program through conferences, regional training seminars, onsite technical assistance, and workshops. The Center has developed a national guidelines publication to assist communities in developing and operating effective youth court programs. National guidelines were developed for program planning and community mobilization, program staffing and funding, legal issues, identifying a respondent population and referral process, program services and sentencing options, volunteer recruitment and management, volunteer training, youth court operations and case management, and program evaluation. The Center also provides resources developed by its allied agencies (i.e., American Bar Association; Street Law, Inc.; and Constitutional Rights Foundation/Chicago) that support youth court programs. To view the Center’s website, visit [www.youthcourt.net](http://www.youthcourt.net).

### National Youth Court Month Provides Opportunities for Civic Engagement

National Youth Court Month, sponsored by the National Youth

Court Center and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, helps youth court programs build recognition in the community for providing civic engagement opportunities for young people. Youth courts are encouraged to celebrate National Youth Court Month each September through activities such as:

- ✓ Hosting an open house for law enforcement officers, judges, probation officers, school personnel, youth service organizations, parents and other stake holders.
- ✓ Sending the local media news releases on youth court activities.
- ✓ Organizing a statewide or regional youth court conference to bring youth and adult volunteers together for education and training.
- ✓ Holding a volunteer banquet or recognition ceremony to give certificates of appreciation.

National Youth Court Month also offers programs an opportunity to plan, conduct and promote community projects and events, and organize outreach into the community for:

- ✓ Educating the public about the valuable contributions of the program to schools, communities, and youth.
- ✓ Promoting youth court as one of the fastest growing youth-driven and youth-led prevention and intervention programs in the nation.
- ✓ Celebrating the positive influence youth courts have on youth respondents, and volunteers by teaching them to be productive citizens and leaders in their communities.
- ✓ Honoring the accomplishments of youth court volunteers, respondents, and staff.

<sup>1</sup> There are four widely used models for youth court: the *Adult Judge Model* in which an adult serves as the judge and youth serve in all other court room roles; the *Youth Judge Model* in which a youth serves as a judge and in all other court room roles; the *Youth Tribunal Model* in which there is no peer jury and a three-youth judge panel presides over the hearing and makes the disposition recommendation; and the *Peer Jury Model* in which an adult or youth serves as judge or monitor, and youth volunteers question the defendant directly and make the disposition recommendation.

## Youth Courts Combine Community Service and Service-learning

Youth volunteers are engaged in service-learning, as they apply their knowledge of due process, learned through training, to prosecute or defend a peer in a court proceeding. Respondents perform community service as they are ordered to give their time and energy in service to others for the betterment of the community.

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Youth court marries *community service*, service activities performed for community betterment, with *service-learning*, a teaching methodology that links learning to service to academic curriculum through careful planning, including reflection and celebration. Through a partnership with the National Youth Court Center, nonprofit groups such as Street Law, Inc. and the Constitutional Rights Foundation/Chicago have developed guidebooks that engage community service and service-learning methodology and activities to help youth courts improve their programming.

Service-learning helps youth:

- ✓ Learn about their community and its people, processes, and institutions.
- ✓ Develop social, political, and analytical skills necessary to participate in community life.
- ✓ Understand the value of service for the good of themselves and the community.
- ✓ Recognize characteristics and actions of a participating citizen.
- ✓ Identify and describe their community.
- ✓ Know ways that groups and individuals can help solve community problems.
- ✓ Develop critical thinking skills and ethical skills for decision-making.

- ✓ Work cooperatively with others.
- ✓ Respect human diversity.
- ✓ Develop a sense of personal responsibility as an active citizen.
- ✓ Learn that individual rights and freedoms are balanced by responsibilities.<sup>2</sup>

The Constitutional Rights Foundation/Chicago workbook *Giving Back: A Community Service-Learning Manual for Youth Courts* (2002) offers a step-by-step process that describes activities that introduce respondents

to concepts such as the elements that make up a community, examples of current community problems, and ways to address

or solve these problems through community service-learning projects. The planned activities guide teens to think about the service they will perform in the community, discuss what community problems might be addressed, plan how they can work with a community agency, and assess the quality of the service they provide. Worksheets are provided as a tracking tool for youth to log in the community agency information, dates of service, and hours served. In the workbook, teens are asked to *stop and think* about the tasks they are doing, and to write down how they are incorporating their own interests into the volunteer experience, what they learned from the experience, and how they felt about the service performed.

One example of a project that can be completed in a day is featured in a lesson plan called “Did You Pay for That?” Respondents are encouraged to give a presentation to pre-teens about the causes and consequences of such offenses as shoplifting, tobacco, alcohol or drug abuse, or assault. The purpose of the exercise is to put respondents in a mentoring role. The guide provides details on materials needed, people needed, transportation considerations, a list of supervisors’ preparation steps, suggestions

on community partners to approach, and action steps, tasks, and questions for respondents to consider throughout the project. Questions include: What did you learn about your community? What did you learn about yourself? If you worked as a team, did you work well together? How could you do this project better next time? Other units in the manual include “Animal Aid” which guides respondents to help out in an animal shelter and “Leaders of Tomorrow,” in which respondents attend civic meetings such as city council, town meetings, or commission hearings, and report back what they experienced or learned.

Street Law, Inc. developed a manual called *Street Law for Youth Courts: Education Workshops* (2002) that offers 15 educational lessons designed to help youth court programs conduct quality educational training for juvenile offenders and for the youth volunteers. The lesson on “Resolving Conflict Through Negotiation” teaches youth to define negotiation, learn and use basic steps in a negotiation process, and discuss how to work with others to resolve problems. Materials needed are listed and useful handouts to foster discussion, detailed guidance for teaching the lesson, and suggestions for community resources are provided. Other lesson plans provided in the manual address issues such as vandalism, laws and values, bullying and sexual harassment, alcohol, who must attend school, and serving on a jury.

As part of National Youth Service Day, an annual program developed by Youth Service America to foster civic engagement and service in America’s young people, millions of youth plan and conduct thousands of service and service-learning projects addressing

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<sup>2</sup> These attributes that describe service-learning come from Active Citizenship Today (ACT), a school-based program that infuses service-learning into the curriculum. ACT was jointly developed by the Close Up Foundation and the Constitutional Rights Foundation, and funded by the DeWitt Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund.

literacy, hunger, public safety, the environment, and health care. Youth courts from around the country participated in service projects as part of this national public awareness and civic engagement campaign in 2003. See Figure 1 for highlights from some youth courts' NYSD events. To learn more about National Youth Service Day, visit <http://www.ysa.org/nysd>.

### **Supportive Policy and Funding for Youth and Teen Courts Exists in Cities and States**

Youth court programs across the country are providing school districts, cities, and states with cost-effective programming for and by young people that teaches responsibility, accountability, and stewardship for the community, while it provides sanctions for criminal activity and misbehavior. According to the National Youth Court Center, of the 46 states that have youth court programs, 25 have legislation that specifically address youth/teen court in some manner as of November 2001. States such as Alaska, Colorado, Mississippi, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming have enacted comprehensive legislation that addresses the operation of youth court programs in the state.

Cities such as Colonie, NY, and counties such as Palm Beach and Broward in Florida are leading the nation in efforts to reach out to youth to provide civic education that will help them in their transition to the workforce, higher education, and adult life. More details on state policies for youth and teen courts can be found in a report produced by Michelle Heward (2002), listed at the end of this brief.

### **Illinois**

Bipartisan legislation recently passed in the Illinois House of Representatives to provide considerable funding to pay for youth court programs. The bill "provides that, in each

### **Figure 1 National Youth Service Day 2003 Highlights**

- Youth from Wrangell Youth court in Wrangell, Alaska, held a bicycle safety event for young citizens of the community. Bikes were inspected for safety, serial numbers were recorded to guard against theft, and youth were fitted for and educated on the importance of wearing bike helmets.
- Autauga County Teen Court volunteers in Prattville, Alabama, identified drug abuse as a community problem and have built their own project to address the issue. Volunteers coordinated guest presenters from Operations Save Teens to speak to parents and all high school students in the Autauga County area. The Teen Court volunteers hosted a parent/teen forum following the presentation to address the community drug problem and examine possible solutions.
- The Johnson County Youth court in Olathe, KS, participated in the "Don't be a Crime Victim" project with local schools. They approached high school art students to aid in the poster design for the project and then displayed the posters in local elementary, middle and high schools in the county. Youth court volunteers participated in the poster design process and developed slogans for the victim's awareness presentation.
- Volunteers for Youth Justice Teen Court Program in Shreveport, Louisiana, conducted a victim's awareness workshop that featured a presentation from a representative from their local victim's awareness office. An art student agreed to act as a consultant for the youth who created a poster sharing tips on how to avoid being a victim. Teen Court volunteers placed the posters throughout the community.
- Flathead County Peer Court in Kalispell, Montana, organized an intergenerational project, bringing youth and seniors together to redesign and paint the Senior Citizens Center sign. This project involved 25 youth defendant volunteers and 15-20 senior citizens from the community.
- Red Hook Youth Court in Brooklyn, New York, created a "Did You Pay for That?" project guide. In addition, the youth court partnered with local elementary schools and neighborhood organizations to develop a presentation that describes how the youth court program handles cases such as truancy, assault, and shoplifting. The presentation focused on the consequences and negative effects on the offender and the community.
- Staff from the Blair County Peer Jury in Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania, used Victim Impact Statements to assess victims' desires to have juvenile offenders participate in service projects, i.e. yard work, painting, and small household projects. If victims did not wish to have the juveniles at their home, they were asked if there was a special project that the juveniles could do on behalf of the victim, such as visit a nursing home or participate in a beautification project.

county in which a teen court, peer court, peer jury, youth court, or other youth diversion program has been created, a county may adopt a mandatory fee of up to \$5 to be assessed as provided and deposited into an account specifically for the operation and administration of a teen court, peer court, peer jury, youth court, or other youth diversion program." The bill has bipartisan sponsorship in the State Senate, where it waits for passage.

Currently, funding filters down to local youth courts from the Illinois Violence Prevention Authority in the form of grants. While some youth courts have gone out of business for lack of funding, most are wasting no time seeking alternative fundraising sources through donations or grants from local organizations and corporations, and sales of food and t-shirts. As the number of youth courts grows, it may become difficult for states to

withhold funding support. In Illinois, the number of youth courts is growing steadily. Jessica Ashley, of the Illinois Youth Court Association, created a directory of youth court programs in the state two years ago. At that time she logged in 68 programs. Today the number of youth court programs in the state has nearly doubled.

According to Ashley, Chicago Public Schools took note of a successful peer jury model in Senn High School that started in 1996. As a result, a two-year-old initiative offers the option of a peer jury program to all public high schools in Chicago. To date, 25 high schools have adopted the program, leading the school system to organize trainings throughout the year. A community collaborative has evolved, with the school district paying for school staff to run the program, and nonprofit agencies, such as the YMCA, offering space and volunteers to assist in the peer jury initiative.

## Tennessee

As in many other states, legislation was enacted in Tennessee that left the establishment and funding of youth court programs up to local jurisdictions. If a county wants a youth court, they can plan for it and seek funding. Some youth court programs in the state have used federal grants to establish the program. According to Anjanette Eash, of the Tennessee Bar Center, many programs apply for federal formula grants from the U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Department of Education, and other federal funds filtered down to the states.

The exponential growth of youth court in Tennessee suggests that lack of state-appropriated funding is not deterring local groups from adopting and implementing the program. In 2001, there were two youth court programs in existence. Currently there are eight programs in the state. The establishment of a youth court program costs a local jurisdiction approximately \$5,000 to \$10,000. To increase support for federal and state funding, evaluation research demon-

strating that the program is successful in reaching its goals and objectives would be helpful. "There are no statistics on how many youth processed through the program return to youth court programs as volunteers, but this happens frequently," says Eash. However, programs are challenged to collect and maintain data on the success of their youth court program for use in obtaining future funding. Programs are also encouraged to work within their communities to seek out funding to support program growth.

## Washington

In the state of Washington, state legislation encourages youth courts, but does not mandate them or provide funding. The legislation defines sentencing options and encourages youth courts within the court and school systems. According to Margaret Fisher, of the Washington State Youth Court Committee, youth courts in the state deal mainly with traffic violations. The incentive for youth to choose youth court adjudication is the avoidance of points on their licenses. A special class has been created and is geared toward teen drivers, focusing on high risk behaviors, such as drunk and reckless driving. Adults in the community feel the program saves lives by addressing and changing irresponsible driving behavior early.

Youth court also offers a benefit for adult volunteers. Fisher says that adults enjoy working with young people through youth court programs, serving as role models and helping to make a difference in their lives. For those who work with young offenders, it serves as a welcome change from focusing exclusively on youth in trouble with the law. Through the youth court program, adults also interact with youth volunteers who are interested in law-related education and service to the community.

## Is There Federal Funding for Youth Court?

This brief has documented the existence of both state and federal fund-

ing resources for youth courts. Additionally, a bounty of funding opportunities are available for the patient grant writer willing to mine carefully through the information on a site sponsored by The White House (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/government/fbc/grants-catalog-index.html>). The website lists over 100 federally-funded grant programs that represent more than \$65 billion in grant opportunities from a variety of federal agencies. The list includes grant programs offered by agencies that are of interest to faith-based and community groups.

## Where Does National Support for Youth Court Stand?

There is currently no federal legislation that specifically funds youth court centers, but 'the little program that could' has been gaining national recognition steadily. In 1995, the Young Lawyer's Division of the American Bar Association (ABA) spearheaded a resolution encouraging support for youth courts, and a resolution was adopted by the ABA House of Delegates. In 2000, the American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF), a nonprofit professional development organization that investigates effective practices, research, and policies that improve the lives of youth, hosted a Capitol Hill forum for legislative aides, executive branch staff, national association leaders, and other Washington policymakers, featuring the National Youth Court Center and a leading local youth court program from Colonie, New York. At that time, roughly 450 youth court programs in the country were operating in communities across the nation. Due to the rapid growth and progress of the program, in 2002 a follow-up Capitol Hill forum on youth court was held. In 2003, AYPF organized a field trip to bring policymakers to see youth court centers in Florida firsthand.

A resolution in support of the national youth court movement was read on December 20, 2001, before the U.S. Congress, by the Speaker of

the House, Dennis J. Hastert. Also in 2001, the board of directors of the national organization Constitutional Rights Foundation and the Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago passed a resolution in support of youth courts.

In 2002, the American Probation and Parole Association Executive Committee adopted a resolution in support of the formation and expansion of youth courts. In the same year, the Board of Street Law, Inc., a national not-for-profit, adopted a resolution in support of the national youth court initiative.

Tracy Godwin Mullins, director of the National Youth Court Center, was presented the Public Service Award for the American Probation and Parole Association's youth court project from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) in 2002. The award is given to individuals and programs that NHTSA feels have made progress in reducing the burdens that traffic crashes place on society, helping save lives and preventing needless injury each year. The National Youth Court Center's website received the February 2002 CivicMind™ Award. Awards are given 10 times per year by CivicMind™.com to exemplary organizations and programs that "energize civic participation and improve education about government and the legal system." CivicMind™.com was launched in 1997 to help civic-minded organizations and citizens realize their civic goals.

## Youth Court is Good for America and Good for Youth

As Tracy Godwin Mullins, from the National Youth Court Center, suggests, the growing appeal of this program is due to a number of reasons. The youth court initiative leans on youth to become civic-minded. The program holds offenders accountable for their actions, placing their peers in control of the dispositional process, building competency through training and exposure to courtroom procedures, and repairing harm done to the victims of juvenile crime. While building ties

with the community, the program offers both offenders and youth volunteers opportunities to exercise and increase important life skills such as decision-making, listening, and communicating. As a community-based and community-operated program, youth court addresses the immediate needs of the youth involved in the program as they learn and practice stewardship of the community. By fostering a culture of service, citizenship, and responsibility, existing youth court programs have already helped many young people better understand the justice system and prevent and reduce crime in their communities. More youth should have the option of partaking in this innovative crime prevention program.

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## About the Author

Sarah S. Pearson is a program director with the American Youth Policy Forum in Washington, DC where she coordinates speaker forums and field trips and organizes the summer policy salon series. She also is the author of *Finding Common Ground: Service-Learning and Education Reform*; *Leveling the Playing Field-Technology As an Equalizer in Education, Transition to Careers and Daily Live*; and *Building an Effective Citizenry, Lessons Learned from Initiatives in Youth Engagement*.

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# National Youth Court Center

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) established the National Youth Court Center (NYCC) at the American Probation and Parole Association in Lexington, Kentucky. The NYCC serves as an information clearinghouse and provides training, technical assistance, and resource materials to assist jurisdictions in developing and operating effective youth court programs.

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