

YOUTH COURT EVALUATION

Evaluation is key to program improvement, development and validation. It is the systematic gathering of information and analysis of that information to answer specific questions aimed at determining a course of action. Evaluation of your peer court is critical to its success now and in the future. With ever shrinking budgets, backing up project claims with solid data is critical to continued support. Quality evaluation of your project will provide crucial information for you and your stakeholders.

Why evaluate?

Evaluation will:

- Improve program operations (what works, what doesn't work and why);
- Promote accountability;
- Determine whether and how to allocate funds given financial boon or bust;
- Determine if and how well the needs of the target population are being met;
- Provide information to adjust and improve peer court activities to meet stated goals and objectives.
- Provide information to justify continued support by stakeholders.

Who are the stakeholders?

Key stakeholders represent the target audience for evaluation findings. They are those individuals who have a share or an interest in the program and its success. They may include but are not limited to:

- Judges;
- Criminal justice officials;
- Law enforcement officials;
- School personnel;
- Funding authorities;
- Policy makers;
- Community residents;
- Clients (youth and parents) and;
- Program staff.

Evaluations

Below are basic sample evaluations for peer court participants and their parents. They have been tested by several peer courts in Utah and were designed to determine the scope and nature of the program's impact on the youth, the organization and the community. The results will assist program administrators to make decisions about implementation of each individual project.

The surveys are presented in a simple format that is adaptable and designed to be completed following an exit hearing. Feel free to change the forms to fit your particular project. You may want to gather other information that will assist your individual project.