

The Pima County Attorney's Office

COMMUNITY JUSTICE BOARDS PROGRAM

How the Program Works

Community Justice Boards are comprised of specially-trained volunteers from communities throughout Pima County. With guidance, training, and support from the County Attorney's Office, these volunteers hold Family Conferences to learn more about the youth, their families, and the circumstances surrounding the offense. The Board subsequently assigns age-appropriate and developmentally-appropriate consequences designed to hold youth accountable for their actions and decisions; build problem-solving, decision-making, and life skills; motivate youth through education; and promote successful futures. Boards also conduct follow-up conferences to monitor progress, encourage and motivate participants, and help youth feel more connected to their communities.

Under the principals of balanced and restorative justice, victims are invited to participate in Family Conferences or, in their absence, are represented by Victim Liaisons who speak on their behalf. These principals, and the goals of the CJB Program, include:

- Allowing offenders to understand how their actions caused harm and created an obligation to their victims and their communities;
- Assisting in the realization that every crime involves a victim and that corporations are not "faceless" victims;
- Creating an opportunity for citizens and victims to have a voice in the justice system;
- Holding juveniles accountable by assigning strength-based consequences that help them repair the harm caused by their behavior;
- Allowing youth to learn from their mistakes and participate in programs or activities that increase their ability to make positive life choices;
- Creating and strengthening community connections and human relationships.

Restoring Justice in the Community

Community Justice Boards use creative consequences and a variety of options for restoring justice in their communities. They include:

- **Accountability** – All participants are required to write apology letters to those affected by their actions (for example: victims, parents, teachers, police officers, etc.). Apology letters are the only mandatory consequences; all other consequences are individualized to the youth and their particular situations.
- **Financial** – Participants may be required to pay restitution to victims and/or reimburse their parents for costs and fees associated with their offense and arrest.
- **Community Service** – Some youth are required to perform community service. The focus of community service assignments is that they be meaningful, strength-based or competency-building opportunities that allow youth to grow in the capacity of knowledge or ability.
- **Educational or Career Plans** – A critical element of the CJB Program is to motivate participants toward successful futures. Many participants, particularly high-school aged youth, are required to create educational or career plans that focus primarily on the education or skills necessary for their chosen professions, a timeline for acquiring the education or skills, and expected income ranges for various stages in the given career.
- **Behavior Modification or Educational Programs** – Many participants are required to complete programs focused on educating youth, teaching them critical decision-making and life skills, and prompting changes in their behavior. Examples of such programs may include MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving), Triumph Substance Abuse Program, Girls With Tools, or Tucson Fire Department's Firestarters' Program.
