

JUVENILE DIVERSION

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is juvenile diversion?

Juvenile diversion, according to NH Court Statute RSA169-B:2, is an alternative method of dispute resolution in which a minor may complete an individually designed program of services in lieu of court proceedings. The goal of diversion is to minimize a minor's contact with the traditional judicial system, providing an alternative outlet to remedy illegal behavior. Diversion of a minor may take place before contact with the court or at the minor's first court appearance.

Q: How do juveniles benefit from participation in a diversion program?

Minors who successfully complete a juvenile diversion programming contract can expect to have their case closed with no juvenile court conviction, provided they commit no further offenses.

Q: How does the community benefit from juvenile diversion programs?

Juvenile diversion programs are designed to provide juveniles with a means to accept responsibility for their actions and to make reparations to their community. As a result, research shows that juveniles who have successfully completed the program have decreased recidivism rates, or, rates of arrest for a subsequent offense. On average, 79.4% of youth who complete a diversion program in New Hampshire remain arrest-free one year after completing the program. This rate is significantly better than the one-year arrest-free rate of traditional justice involvement, at 58.7%. In addition, diverting eligible juveniles from the traditional justice system allows the courts to devote their resources to cases in which a more formal sentence is needed.

Q: How is a juvenile referred to a diversion program?

Referral of a juvenile to a diversion program may be made by any interested party. The most common referral sources include police officers, prosecutors, juvenile probation and parole officers, and the court. Parents or guardians who believe that their child may qualify can contact a diversion program in their county for more information about how to apply. (See the last page of this document for programs listed by county)

Q: What are the eligibility requirements?

The criteria for referral to a juvenile diversion program include: the facts of the case warrant a court hearing, referral of the case is in the best interests of the public and the minor, and the minor and the parents/guardians give informed and voluntary consent. Some individual programs may add additional requirements such as that it is the minor's first offense, that it is a misdemeanor, or that the minor accepts responsibility for the offense.

Q: What services and resources are offered?

When a minor is accepted into a juvenile diversion program, he or she will partake in an assessment to identify areas of strength and need. He or she will then meet with a panel of volunteers or staff members to develop an individualized program of activities and services for the minor to complete over an average period of three to six months. Actual resources offered by each program vary, but may include services such as: alcohol and other drug education, anger management classes, community services, mediation, restitution, alcohol and other drug treatment, family/participant educational classes, community reparation, or victim participation.

Q: Where can I find more information?

For more information visit www.NHCourtDiversion.org

Q: What Juvenile Diversion programs are offered in my area?

BELKNAP COUNTY

Belknap County Restorative Justice
Youth Assistance Program

CARROLL COUNTY

White Mountain Restorative Justice

CHESHIRE COUNTY

Keene Juvenile Diversion Program

COOS COUNTY

Berlin Police Department

GRAFTON COUNTY

Grafton County Juvenile Restorative Justice
Communities for Alcohol and Drug Free Youth
White River Junction Valley Court Diversion

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

Crispin's House
UpReach Therapeutic Riding Center
Hillsborough Youth Services
Manchester Office of Youth Services
The Youth Council

MERRIMACK COUNTY

Merrimack County Juvenile Diversion

ROCKINGHAM COUNTY

Greater Derry Juvenile Diversion

STRAFFORD COUNTY

Dover Juvenile Court Diversion Program
Rochester Juvenile Diversion

SULLIVAN COUNTY

This county is currently in transition