



North Carolina Teen Court and Recidivism: The Survey Research

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Abstract

Teen court is a program that aims to deter juveniles from criminal activity. The program serves as an alternative to the traditional criminal justice system. Juvenile first-time misdemeanor offenders are eligible to participate in teen court in hopes that they will avoid further offenses. This study aims to understand the structure of teen court programs in North Carolina and their impact on recidivism. This study will compare juveniles who completed teen court to juveniles who underwent other diversion programs. This study will also compare recidivism data of juveniles who participated in teen court and juveniles who went through the traditional justice system. This is done through site visits, observations, interviews, and a survey. A survey was created with a careful algorithm and sent to 68 teen courts in North Carolina. The survey will collect data on the type of teen court programs and the sentences typically given. A survey will also be sent to a control group of counties without teen court programs. Through these surveys and observations, we will compare teen court's impact on recidivism to other diversion methods.

Methods

Conduct site visits, observations, interviews, and collect data from the survey.

IV: Participation in teen court diversion program

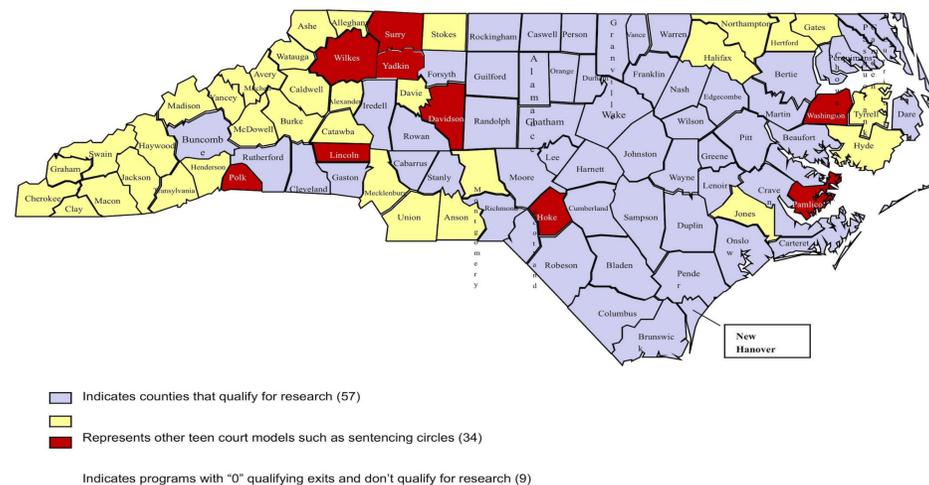
DV: The outcome or effectiveness of the diversion program, which may include factors such as recidivism rates, rehabilitation success, or other measures of juvenile delinquency and behavior.

CV: Demographic characteristics, risk factors, and offense details of juvenile offenders.

This project not only collected quantitative data but also tried to understand the structure of teen courts in North Carolina, including their models and sentencing practices, as well as to learn about best practices for diverting youth from the traditional justice system in counties without teen court programs.

The Survey

Teen Court Evaluation: Qualifying and Non-Qualifying Counties



Within North Carolina there are 68 counties served by teen court and 32 counties that are not.

A survey was created and will be sent to the counties with a teen court diversion program and the counties without.

The Survey

- Will be used to understand the type of teen court model and the logistics of the program
- Is an opportunity to learn more about the diversion methods used in counties without teen court programs

Survey Questions

Introduction	Program Details	Program Operation	Program Effectiveness	Feedback and Future Plans
➤ Title	➤ Model	➤ Recruitment and Selection	➤ Session Frequency	➤ Program Expansion or Changes
➤ Counties Served	➤ Model Definition	➤ Volunteer Composition	➤ Years in Operation	➤ Modifications or Adaptations
➤ Teen Court Availability	➤ Key Elements	➤ Impact of Volunteer Types	➤ Limits on Youth Admissions	➤ Positive Outcomes or Impacts
➤ Other Restorative Justice Programs	➤ Roles Assigned to Volunteers	➤ Roles within the Teen Court	➤ Strategies for Enhancement	➤ Adoption of Best Practices

Results

A 50-question survey was created using the question topics from the chart titled *survey questions*. The survey has logic embedded which determines questions based on answers to previous questions. The survey has not been sent out and returned by the counties yet.

However, some findings are:

- Most organizations offer teen court services in multiple counties across North Carolina, indicating a widespread reach of these programs.
- The incorporation of built-in logic in the survey design will significantly enhance the survey experience for respondents.
- Skip logic will reduce respondent burden by eliminating irrelevant questions, resulting in higher completion rates and improved data.

Limitations; The survey relies on self-reported data which could be subject to inaccuracy or bias. This project also solely focuses on programs in North Carolina which may limit the ability of the results to be generalized.

References

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