

Early Intervention Services

Philosophy: Nicasa believes that youth and adults can be re-directed from participating in risky behaviors and taught the skills necessary to lead delinquency-free, and substance-abuse free identities.

Teen Court

The target population in Teen Court are youth from northern Lake County, Illinois who are between the ages of 12 and 17 (18 year-olds are served if they are still in school), and are referred to one of 7 Teen Courts used by 17 Police Departments, and the Lake County Sheriff's Department. The goals of the Teen Court program are to reduce recidivism, improve offender competencies, repair the harm done by the offense, and improve the offender's bond to the community.

Teen Court is facilitated by Nicasa, but it is actually the police officers and Sheriff's deputies who choose to refer the youth to a Teen Court. They identify the appropriate youth who have committed first-time misdemeanor offenses. The officer recruits the youth and family to participate in Teen Court. The officer sits with the youth and his or her parent/guardian, explains the program, gets the required signatures, and sends the paperwork on to Nicasa. Participation in Teen Court is an admission of guilt and from this point forward, the youth is called the "offender."

Upon receipt of the referral paperwork, Nicasa contacts the family to inform them of the next court date. Jurors are area high school students who have participated in training and made the commitment to serve in monthly courts. Police officers attend court to act as bailiffs and explain the offense. Area lawyers volunteer to act as judges. Most Teen Courts meet once a month, but a second court is scheduled if the court date cannot be scheduled within 45 days.

Representatives from each participating police department serve on a Teen Court Advisory Board which meets quarterly. This board – which also has community service site representatives and volunteer judges – monitors the program, discusses trends, and advises on program modification as needed.

Teen Court is based on balanced and restorative justice. Its foundation is a coherent set of values and principles, a guiding vision, and an action-oriented mission.

The Principles of Teen Court:

- Crime is injury.
- Crime hurts individual victims, communities, and juvenile offenders and creates an obligation to make things right.
- All parties should be a part of the response to the crime, including the victim if he or she wishes, the community, and the juvenile offender.

- The victim's perspective is central to deciding how to repair the harm caused by the crime.
 - Accountability for the juvenile offender means accepting responsibility and acting to repair the harm done.
 - The community is responsible for the well-being of all its members, including both victim and offender.
 - All human beings have dignity and worth.
 - Restoration -- repairing the harm and rebuilding relationships in the community -- is the primary goal of Teen Court.
 - Results are measured by how much repair was done rather than by how much punishment was inflicted.
 - Crime control cannot be achieved without active involvement of the community.
 - Teen Court is respectful of age, abilities, sexual orientation, family status, and diverse cultures and backgrounds -- whether racial, ethnic, geographic, religious, economic, or other -- and all are given equal protection and due process.
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- Support from the community, opportunity to define the harm experienced, and participation in decision-making about steps for repair result in increased victim recovery from the trauma of crime.
 - Community involvement in preventing and controlling juvenile crime, improving neighborhoods, and strengthening the bonds among community members results in community protection.
 - Through understanding the human impact of their behavior, accepting responsibility, expressing remorse, taking action to repair the damage, and developing their own capacities, juvenile offenders become fully integrated, respected members of the community.
 - Juvenile justice professionals, as community justice facilitators, organize and support processes in which individual crime victims, other community members, and juvenile offenders are involved in finding constructive resolutions to delinquency.

Teen Court is funded by local government grants, community donations, minimal client fees, and the United Way of Lake County. The time from referral into Teen Court and release from Teen Court varies depending on the sentencing options or results of the Youth Assessment. Optimally, a youth who required no other service would complete the program within three months. There is a \$50.00 participation fee.

8-hour TRACK

Serving youth between the ages of 12 and 17 (18 if still in school) that are referred by area Administrative Hearings, this expanded TRACK class' goals are to reduce recidivism, improve decision-making skills, improve the youth's problem solving ability and provide basic substance abuse education. It is typically delivered on a Saturday morning over a two-week period in either Nicasa's Round Lake or Waukegan office, but this schedule varies based on the needs of participating youth. It is funded by client fees.

GOALS

The GOALS program targets young adults 18 to 21-years-of-age who are referred by the criminal justice system and some colleges. In GOALS, clients can utilize a web-based program that is theoretically grounded in the model Community Reinforcement Approach (CRA) to behavioral therapy. Its goal is to reduce the likelihood of further criminal behavior or substance abuse. The program is composed of interactive, multimedia modules, including those focused on cognitive behavioral skills training, e.g., effective strategies for refusing drugs, managing thoughts about drug use, functional analysis/self-management planning, etc.). The program also includes modules to prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Additional modules teach skills to improve psychosocial functioning (e.g., family/social relations, managing negative moods, etc.). It can be customized to build an individualized treatment plan.

GOALS takes place at Nicasa's Round Lake facility. It is self-paced. The number of hours is individualized based on each client's situation and/or the recommendation of the referral source. It is funded by client fees.

DUI Services – Risk Reduction Education

Risk Reduction Education targets adult DUI offenders who have been assessed at minimal, moderate, or significant risk. It is funded by client fees, Lake County CDBG monies, and DASA. The 10-hour Risk Reduction education follows the *DUI Risk Education Program* created by the Change Companies to comply with Illinois Code 2060.505. It is designed for groups that typically make high risk choices such as impaired driving. Its goal is to educate the driver on the risks and consequences of alcohol and other drug use. These services are offered at Nicasa's Round Lake, Waukegan, Buffalo Grove, Highland Park, Mundelein, and Zion locations. It is offered in English or Spanish. The days and format of the 10-hour program vary by location and client demand.