

2015 Quality of Life Faculty Community-Based Applied Research Grant Competition
Project Scope: Criminal Justice

Broward Sheriff's Office, Civil Citation Program

PURPOSE OF STUDY:

The Broward Sheriff's Office seeks a comprehensive, independent assessment of the overall effectiveness of BSO's Civil Citation initiative to achieve program objectives. The assessment should assess how the program has been operating and generate observations, findings and recommendations, where appropriate, based on nationally recognized best practices, regarding the effectiveness of the program including any improvements in program delivery.

PROGRAM DEFINITION:

The Civil Citation program operates in accordance with Florida Statutes 985.12. In Broward County, the program is a collaboration between BSO, municipal law enforcement agencies, the 17th Judicial District, The Broward State Attorney's Office, the Broward Human Services Department, and the Broward Children's Services Council. This program offers early intervention, community counseling referrals and other appropriate community resources to divert qualifying, non-violent juvenile misdemeanor offenders from the Juvenile Justice System. The civil citation program works with other community partners in an effort to reduce juvenile crime and to provide services for at-risk youth. A juvenile who commits a misdemeanor or violates a county or municipal ordinance, with the exception of domestic violence cases, is eligible to participate. The juvenile must have no prior arrests or juvenile sanctions. The victim must be in agreement with the youth's participation in the program. Both the child and the parent/legal guardian must agree to participate in the program and abide by the rules of the supervision process. By statute, Law Enforcement Officers have the discretion of issuing a civil citation or arresting the child in some jurisdictions. By policy, the issuance of a Civil Citation to a qualifying youth is mandatory for all Broward Sheriff Deputies.

The Law Enforcement Officer or Sheriff's Deputy issues the Civil Citation Notice to Appear at the scene, giving the juvenile two business days to contact the program office to schedule an appointment for the initial assessment. When necessary, a youth in receipt of a Civil Citation may be transported to the Broward Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC) for safety or processing purposes. A parent/legal guardian must accompany the child to scheduled assessments. The family will meet with a program coordinator and the youth will be given sanctions that he/she must complete. The sanctions can include, but are not limited to:

- General Counseling and case Management
- Substance abuse education classes
- Mental Health Counseling
- Community service hours
- Essays, workbooks, multi-media assignments, etc.

The youth must complete all assigned sanctions to successfully complete the program. If the juvenile fails to successfully complete their assigned sanctions/services for any reason or if they are charged with another crime while they are in the program, his/her case will be forwarded to the State Attorney's Office for criminal prosecution. Upon successful completion of the program, the juvenile's record will be closed out in the Juvenile Justice Information System and the juvenile will not have a record of arrest.

METHODOLOGY

To be determined by the applicant.

PAST WORK IN SUBJECT AREA OF NOTE

Juvenile Justice Diversion Programs: A Study of Civil Citation and Teen Court Programs in Florida, Eckert Family Foundation, by Gary Wallby, Ph. D., Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida, July 31, 2008