

Fairfax County Alternative Accountability Program (AAP) Repairing Harm from Youth Offenses in the Community

Program Overview

Summary:

The Alternative Accountability Program (AAP) launched in 2014 to address crimes committed by youth with accountability while reducing risk factors tied to court involvement and giving a voice to victims. AAP is based on restorative justice (RJ) principles. RJ began in Fairfax County in the Schools in 2004 and helps youth and community members have harmed to address select criminal offenses effectively without creating a criminal record for the youth involved. The AAP is a unique, collaborative effort to pro-actively address priority areas of concern surrounding juvenile crime and discipline.



Who is involved: The following agencies and organizations are collaborating:

- Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD)
- Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS)
- Fairfax County Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court (JDRDC)
- Northern Virginia Mediation Service (NVMS)
- Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS)
- Fairfax City Police Department
- Additional supports may come from other county agencies and nonprofits (in-kind space, outreach, research)

Program Goals: The agencies are using RJ conferencing as a proven approach to:

- Reduce the number of youth who are court-involved and have criminal records;
- Hold youth accountable for their actions *without* exposing them to risk factors associated with having a criminal record;
- Create appropriate, incident-specific responses for each case;
- Reduce recurrence of criminal acts by youth; and
- Provide support for victims to participate in identifying how their harm is addressed.

The Needs Addressed: The program focuses on critical issues including:

- Re-offence and recidivism of harmful criminal and discipline acts;
- Minority over-representation of youth in criminal justice & disciplinary proceedings;
- Community stakeholder harm from youth crimes; and
- Victim impact.

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The Program Approach: The partner agencies collaborate in order to identify eligible youth, provide services and share information:

- Police Officers refer youth arrested for appropriate crimes;
- Juvenile Courts check the eligibility of youth for RJ program;
- NVMS, FCPS and JDRDC provide services in the form of restorative conferences involving the referred youth, their parent(s) and affected community members;
- NVMS and FCPS track compliance with agreements;
- NVMS maintains program data and shares it with partner agencies for program evaluation (within confidentiality procedures); and
- Representatives from all partner agencies meet frequently to review progress and continue work to advance and expand access to the program.

Timing: The Program launched as a pilot in Fall 2014 within a portion of the County and throughout all schools. AAP becomes part of Fairfax County Police Department policies county-wide on June 1, 2017.

Service Locations: AAP services are provided in a variety of locations within Fairfax County, including schools, community centers and Police stations.

The Program is supported by the Fairfax County Consolidated Community Funding Pool.

For More Information

<http://nvms.us/fairfax-rj/>