

What is the Diversion Program?

The goal of the Stephenson County Juvenile Diversion Program is to divert as many juveniles away from formal court involvement as possible.

Police reports are reviewed by the Assistant State's Attorney and the Juvenile Probation Officers for referral to the program.

Referrals are then sent a packet explaining the program with an appointment for a Preliminary Conference.

Candidates are then screened during the Preliminary conference by conducting a Risk Assessment and gathering background information from you and your parents(s).

What Information will I be asked at the Preliminary Conference?

You will be asked the following:

- Your legal history
- Your family history
- Your companions/peers
- Your physical and mental health
- Any alcohol/drug usage
- Your education background and school status
- Your employment history
- Your emotional needs
- How you use your free time/hobbies
- What skills you may have
- Any behavioral problems

Stephenson County Juvenile Diversion Program is facilitated through the Stephenson County Probation Department located at:

Stephenson County Courthouse
15 N Galena Ave
Freeport IL 61032
(815) 235-8282

Stephenson County Juvenile Diversion Program

Question and Answer Guide for Juveniles and Parents



Why am I being considered for the program?

- Potential candidates are juveniles that have had limited to no involvement with the court system.
- You and your parent(s) do not have to participate, as the Diversion Program is strictly voluntary. If you and your parent(s) decide not to participate, the matter will be referred back to the State's Attorney's Office for formal court action.
- If you and your parent(s) engage in the Diversion Program, but later decide not to continue, the matter will also be referred back to the State's Attorney's Office for formal court action.
- Upon successful completion of the Diversion Program, the criminal case will be closed with no formal record.

How can I participate?

A referral letter containing an information packet and an appointment letter will be sent to your house.

- Please complete the information packet to the best of your ability and bring it with you to the Preliminary Conference appointment.
- You and your parent(s) will need to attend the Preliminary Conference in order to determine your appropriateness.
- You and your parent(s) will need to sign Release of Information forms, which allows the officer to verify any information necessary to complete the process.
- The Preliminary Conference may take up to 1 1/2 hours in order to be certain all information needed has been obtained.
- If you are accepted into the Juvenile Diversion Program, a contract between you, your parent(s) and the Diversion Officer will be developed based on your individual needs.

Who must attend?

We acknowledge blended families and value these relationships. Due to confidentiality concerns there are limitations as to who can attend the Preliminary Conference.

Persons who must attend are:

- The youth
- Biological parent or legal guardian (if you are a legal guardian you must provide court documents giving you legal guardianship)

Can anyone else attend?

Yes, but it is limited to:

- Your attorney
- Step-parents (if they are involved in the direct supervision of the youth and only with the approval of the custodial parent or legal guardian).

Is anyone prohibited from attending?

- Small children
- Friends of the family
- Teachers
- Clergy/Community members
- Grandparents/aunts/uncles, etc. (unless they are the court appointed guardian)