



JUVENILE ARREST AVOIDANCE PROGRAM

Juvenile Civil Citation Program

INFORMATION SHEET



The greatly-expanded and permanent Juvenile Arrest Avoidance Program, more commonly referred to as the juvenile civil citation program, went into effect on August 1, 2017, in Hillsborough County.

Youth arrested for minor crimes are twice as likely to re-offend as those issued civil citations and assigned to youth diversion programs.

Breaking the cycle of juvenile recidivism and keeping our kids on the right path, while promoting public safety, is our top priority—allowing us to focus our resources on the crimes that pose the greatest threats to our community.

Civil citations allow for better allocation of resources, reduce costs to taxpayers, and most importantly, reduce recidivism and increase public safety.

Civil citations make economic sense:

- The average cost to prosecute a juvenile is approximately \$5,000.00.¹
- It cost more than \$55,000.00 annually to incarcerate a juvenile.²
- By contrast, the average cost to enroll a juvenile in a civil citation program is less than \$400.00.³

All key criminal justice stakeholders in Hillsborough County are parties to the program, including: State Attorney's Office, Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, Tampa Police Department, Public Defender's Office, Administrative Office of the Courts, Temple Terrace Police Department, Plant City Police Department, Agency for Community Treatment Services, Inc., University of South Florida Police Department, Tampa International Airport Police Department, and Clerk of the Court.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

- Law enforcement may issue civil citations to first-time offending youth (under 18 years of age) who commit non-serious, delinquent acts as an efficient and innovative alternative to arrest and custody.
- All misdemeanors, including petty theft, trespass, and misdemeanor marijuana possession, are eligible offenses, **EXCEPT 13 enumerated exclusions, including:**

Battery (Domestic Violence)
Violation of Injunction
Lewd & Lascivious Act
Possession of a Firearm
Driving Under the Influence
Assault on a Specified Official
Voyeurism

Exhibition of a Weapon
Exposure of Sexual Organ
Disorderly Intoxication
Loitering & Prowling
Reckless Driving
Racing

- To maximize utilization of the program, the agreement expressly states that a citation shall be issued except where there is a material and immediate threat to public safety, based on the discretion of the involved officer.
- Once issued a civil citation, the youth and parent/guardian will meet with a case worker to assess the appropriate sanctions, which may include drug treatment, restitution, community service, specialized classes, and supervision, among other possible penalties.
- If the youth successfully completes the terms and conditions of the sanction, the case is closed without referral to the State Attorney's office.
- If the youth does not successfully complete the sanctions, the case is referred to the State Attorney's office for a charging decision.
- The Juvenile Arrest Avoidance Program exemplifies our cooperation in order to ensure the effective use of juvenile civil citations to promote the best long-term outcomes for our youth and the safety of our entire community.

The State Attorney's mission is to build a safer, stronger community while promoting justice and fairness for all.

STAY ENGAGED

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#SaferStrongerHillsborough

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¹ American Bar Association. (n.d.). State Policy Implementation Project. Criminal Justice Section, 2.

² Justice Policy Institute. (n.d.). Calculating the Full Price for Youth Incarceration. (2014, December). Retrieved from www.justicepolicy.org.

³ American Bar Association. (n.d.). State Policy Implementation Project. Criminal Justice Section, 2.