

Appropriate Placements

It is always the intent of the CDW to find the least-restrictive placement option. CDWs have five least-restrictive alternatives to consider when making placement decisions:

- Parent or custodial guardian, unless prohibited by the court for alleged abuse.
- Responsible adult, such as a relative, neighbor or friend of family.
- Emergency shelter.
- Crisis stabilization units, if applicable.
- In-patient mental health assessment, if applicable.

CDW Mission Statement

The mission of court designated workers is to reduce delinquency among Kentucky's youth through a collaboration of statewide pre-court services and programs that promote education and accountability.

CDWs help give young people a brighter future



John D. Minton, Jr.
Chief Justice of Kentucky

Court designated workers have given a second chance to thousands of Kentucky youth by helping troubled young people avoid formal court appearances through diversion programs.

The diversion process teaches young people to be accountable for their actions and encourages them to avoid other encounters with the law.

Contact Your Local CDW Office



Court Designated Worker Program
Department of Family & Juvenile Services
Administrative Office of Courts
1001 Vandalay Drive
Frankfort Kentucky 40601
502-573-2350 or 800-928-2350
www.courts.ky.gov

Court Designated Worker Program

*Making a Difference
for Kentucky Youth*



Court Designated Workers Make a Difference

When a young person is in trouble, positive intervention can mean the difference between a bright future and one with challenges. In Kentucky, court designated workers process complaints against juveniles under age 18, giving CDWs the opportunity to help thousands of children and teens every year.

The Court Designated Worker Program began in 1986 when the Kentucky General Assembly established a statewide pre-court program. The program addresses complaints filed against juveniles prior to any action taken in formal court.

The CDW Program operates under the direction of the Department of Family & Juvenile Services of the Administrative Office of the Courts. Every Kentucky county has the services of a CDW who is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The CDW Program ensures due process for juveniles by involving them in a review of the complaint and explaining their rights under the law. They are also informed of the options for handling their case, whether informally through a diversion agreement or formally through the court system.

When appropriate, juveniles are diverted from the formal court system. Those who are eligible for diversion will not have a formal court record if they successfully complete the supervised educational and treatment-based program agreed upon in a pre-court contract, called a diversion agreement.

Duties of a Court Designated Worker

CDWs are responsible for:

- Processing all public and status complaints on children under age 18.
- Assisting law enforcement in the custody process.
- Conducting preliminary investigations and interviews.
- Developing and supervising diversion agreements.

Public and Status Offenses

The CDW receives all complaints, which fall into two categories, status offenses and public offenses.

Status offenses are non-criminal forms of juvenile behavior, such as running away from home, not attending school, tobacco and alcohol offenses, and exhibiting beyond-control behaviors at home or at school.

Public offenses are defined in the same terms as adult charges.

Anyone can file a complaint against a juvenile, including a police officer, victim, parent or school official. Juveniles who have a complaint filed against them are given the opportunity to meet with a CDW.

Custody Instead of Arrest

Under Kentucky's juvenile justice system, children under age 18 are taken into custody instead of being arrested.

CDWs assist law enforcement officials in finding appropriate placements, such as with parents or

guardians, relatives or an emergency shelter. Detention may be authorized by a judge if there are concerns that a juvenile may reoffend, fail to appear for court or be a safety risk.

Diversion Agreements

The goal of diversion is to reduce further involvement in the court system. CDWs follow established criteria to determine if a juvenile is eligible to participate in a diversion agreement or if the case, by law, must be referred to formal court. If the juvenile is eligible and agrees to the informal process, he or she enters into a diversion agreement with the CDW.

The diversion agreement holds juveniles accountable for past actions and provides tools to manage current behavioral issues.

These tools include:

- Prevention and education programs
- Service learning projects
- Community service
- Restitution
- Curfew
- School attendance
- Counseling
- Treatment

The CDW monitors juveniles throughout the diversion program, which helps ensure they are given the necessary skills to make better decisions in the future.

When the juvenile successfully completes a diversion program, the case is closed and no formal court record is created.

