

CALGARY YOUTH JUSTICE COMMITTEES



**Community Involvement in the Intervention
and Prevention of Youth Crime**

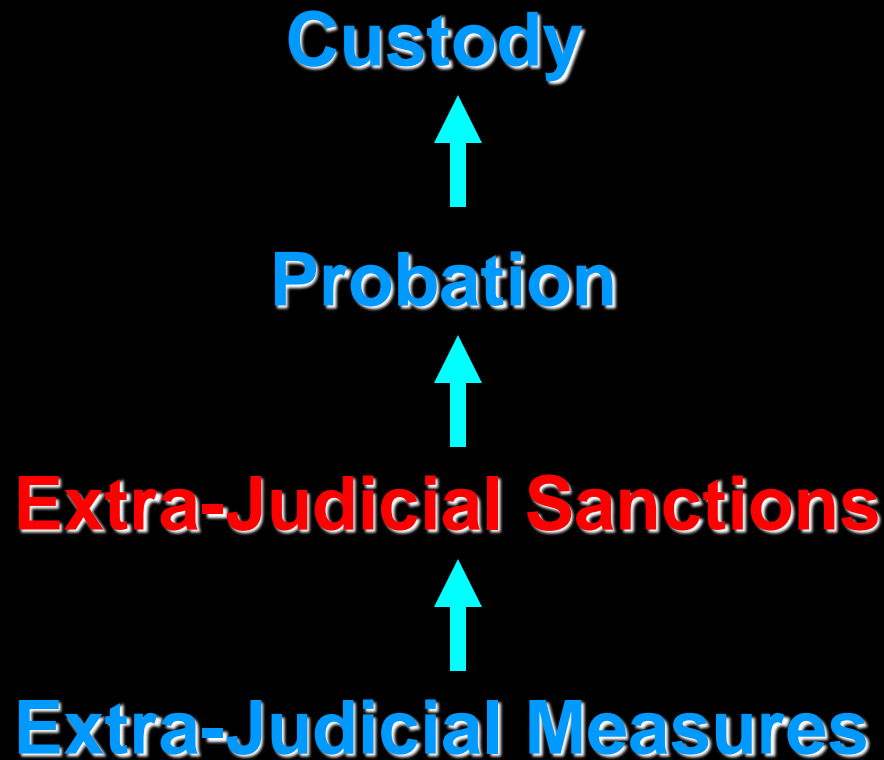
Youth Crime in Canada

- In Canada there is a separate legal system for youth aged 12 to 17 years
- The Youth Criminal Justice System is legislated by the federal government under the **Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA)**
- The YCJA replaced the Young Offenders Act in 2003 and is based on the principles of **restorative justice**.

Restorative Justice Principles

- To involve the community in preventing and responding to youth crime
- To repair, as much as possible, the damage done to the victim and the community
- To repair the relationship between the offender and his/her community
- To reduce the number of young offenders going through the courts and receiving a formal youth record

Levels of Response to Youth Crime under the YCJA



Extra-Judicial Measures



- For least serious offences/first time offenders
- Applied directly by police outside the judicial system

Extra Judicial Sanctions



- For minor to moderately serious crimes
- Applied by the Calgary Youth Attendance Centre and Calgary Youth Justice Committees

Probation



- Offence is serious but incarceration is not considered appropriate
- Applied by Calgary Youth Probation Officers

Custody



- For the most serious offences and repeat/habitual offenders
- Youth are incarcerated in the Calgary Young Offenders Centre

Youth Justice Committees in Canada



- Youth Justice Committees (YJCs) are comprised of volunteers who administer the **Extra-Judicial Sanctions Program** to young offenders aged 12-18 in their communities
- Most, but not all provinces/territories have an active youth justice committee program in place

Youth Justice Committees in Alberta



- Alberta YJCs have been in existence since 1998, making the province a pioneer in the field of community based restorative youth justice
- Over 125 YJCs, each of which is accredited and overseen by the Young Offenders Branch of the AB Solicitor General

Calgary Youth Justice Committees



- 300-350 volunteers serve in 24 YJCs across Calgary
- Calgary YJCs are overseen/ supported by two organizations:
 - The Calgary Youth Justice Society (CYJS)
 - The Calgary Youth Attendance Centre (CYAC)

The Calgary Youth Justice Society (CYJS)

- Non-governmental organization funded by various agencies (e.g., FCSS, AB Solicitor General)
- Role is to support committees by:
 - providing ongoing volunteer recognition
 - processing and training new volunteers
 - develop and deliver ongoing education/training
 - developing partnerships with community service organizations and other stakeholders
 - educating the public about YJCs

The Calgary Youth Attendance Centre (CYAC)

Coordinates the EJS Program in Calgary for the Young Offenders Branch of the Solicitor General of Alberta as follows:

- processes and distributes youth files to YJCs
- provides advice/support to YJCs regarding implementation of the EJS Program
- deals directly with youth in the EJS Program who have committed the most serious offences or are repeat offenders
- works with the Calgary Youth Justice Society to develop appropriate training and identify relevant resources for volunteers

Role of Calgary YJCs

- administer the EJS Program by convening panels of 2-3 committee members who meet with the young offender and identify, then assign meaningful consequences (e.g., community service)
- Panels may also refer youth to programs/ services (e.g., assessment for drug abuse)
- some YJCs are also involved in victim advocacy, public education, and crime prevention

Examples of Consequences

- Letter of apology
- Community service (maximum 60 hours)
- Charitable donation (maximum \$200)
- Financial restitution (maximum \$1,000)



Success of YJCs

- Each year, Calgary YJCs deal with over 800 young people and in the past 10 years over 7,000 youth
- Approximately 90% of youth complete the EJS Program and 80% do not re-enter the program
- An inexpensive and highly effective crime intervention and prevention program

**To volunteer or obtain additional
information please contact:**

The Calgary Youth Justice Society
Room 206, 8989 McLeod Trail SW,
Calgary, Alberta T2H 0M2

Phone: 261-9861

Fax: 212-8926

Email: info@calgaryyouthjustice.com