



## Village of Arlington Heights

33 South Arlington Heights Road  
Arlington Heights, Illinois 60005-1499  
(847) 368-5000  
Website: [www.vah.com](http://www.vah.com)

Thank you for your interest in the Arlington Heights Peer Jury Program. Before you make your decision to apply you need to know what is expected from our members.

Our Peer Jury sessions are held the first Wednesday of every month at 7:00pm. The sessions start in September and go through to the first Wednesday in June. We meet at the Arlington Heights Police Department on the second floor and our sessions last between 60-90 minutes. We hear up to three new cases and three returning cases at each meeting. Members are expected to maintain the confidentiality of each case that comes before the jury.

Your commitment to the program is very important. Out of 10 meetings we have scheduled, during the school year, you are allowed only 3 absences. I understand that unexpected events occur and you might have to miss more than 3 meetings. It is each member's responsibility to contact me and let me know. In order for those senior members to earn a Presidential Citation Award at the end of the school year, they must attend 75% of the meetings held.

If you are prepared to make this commitment and join our peer jury, please read the packet and fill out the Juror Application Form and Parent Consent Letter. Return the two forms to me at the Arlington Heights Police Department. Once your application has been reviewed and approved, you will notify by letter. I do not take on new members in the middle of a school year. If you are applying during the school year, you will be notified prior to the beginning of the next school year.

Peer Jury Coordinator/Juvenile Investigations  
Arlington Heights Police Department  
200 E. Sigwalt Street  
Arlington Heights, IL 60005  
#847-368-5348

## **THE PEER JURY PROGRAM**

**What is the peer jury program?** It is a program operating under the auspices of the local police department which is designed to provide a meaningful and remedial method of dealing with selected juvenile (17 year old or younger) offenders without referral to the Cook County Juvenile Court system. It does not determine guilt or innocence. A case is only sent to the peer jury for a hearing when (1) the offenders admits having committed the offense (2) the police officer handling the case determines that such a disposition is appropriate and (3) the offender and his/her parent(s) consent in writing to such a disposition and sign the Waiver of Liability and Confidentiality.

When these conditions are met, the offender and his/her parent(s) are scheduled for a hearing before the peer jury panel at the police station at a definite date and time. At the hearing, a juvenile detective summarizes the facts of the case. The offender is then questioned by the members of the panel. The offender and his/her parent(s) then withdraw from the room while the entire peer jury deliberates and fixes an appropriate punishment. The sentence usually includes some form of individual community service.

The offender and his/her parent(s) are then recalled and informed of the sentence. The offender is then given a written copy of the sentence and a return date is assigned. The offender is expected to return on the assigned date and show proof that he/she completed the requirements.

At the discharge hearing the offender and his/her parent(s) appear again. The panel reviews the offender's documents and performance review form. The panel will ask the offender questions about his/her experience while performing the sentence. If satisfactory, the offender is discharged. If the performance is incomplete or unsatisfactory, the discharge hearing may be continued or the offender's case will be forwarded to the Cook County Juvenile Court system.

## ANSWERS TO SOME QUESTIONS

**Will any of my child's friends appear before the Peer Jury as an offender?** Prior to each meeting, the jurors will be provided with the list of offenders appearing before them. If a peer juror knows one or all of the offenders they will be removed from sitting on the Peer Jury Panel of eight. Members of the peer jury understand their responsibility to maintain confidentiality when it comes to who appears before them.

**What kinds of sentences are imposed?** Typically, the sentence involves the performance of a certain number of community service hours at an agency such as a hospital, nursing home, etc. All sentences are performed as individuals and not as part of a group. Sentences may also include an apology letter to victim or hours spent sitting in on bond hearings at the Rolling Meadows Court House.

**Will anyone outside the police department and the peer jury group know my child is serving a sentence?** Except for the supervision at the community service site, **absolutely not!** The peer jury proceedings and records are confidential. A suspected violation of confidentiality results in the dismissal from the program. No list of offenders appearing before the peer jury is ever published and the press is not permitted to report on individual cases.

**How are peer jury personnel selected?** The appointing authority for all peer jury personnel is the detective assigned to run the program. Peer jurors are recruited through advertisement or by word of mouth. Peer jurors are individuals of good standing in the community, have good moral fiber, high school students and no negative contacts with police departments. Those interested in participation, must fill out an application and submit it to the detective assigned to the program. Once the application has been reviewed, the individual will be contacted by letter if they have been accepted into the program.

**What is the attitude toward offenders?** All offenders appearing before the peer jury are treated with dignity and respect. Demeaning and belittling attitudes or comments will not be tolerated. The objective of the program is to develop a sense of responsibility and accountability in the offender.

**Who is present during the peer jury session?** The sessions are made up of a panel of 6- 8 peer jurors/high school students who will address the offender directly. The rest of the peer jury members, sit quietly listening to the case being presented. The detective in charge of the program is present and will read the facts of the case based on the police report filed. The parent(s) of the offender are also present in the room.

**What are the program's objectives?** This program is to help the child and family deal with a problem situation in a constructive and positive manner.

## **PEER JURY**

### **Juror Rules and Regulations**

#### **APPOINTMENT**

- Peer jurors are appointed by the detective in charge of the program or other appointed designee.
- An applicant must be between the ages of 14-17 or in high school.
- An applicant must live or go to school in the surrounding city.
- Applications are available from the Arlington Heights Police Department or your school police liaison officer
- Confidentiality is of the utmost importance. Members of the peer jury program must not discuss cases outside of the peer jury meetings.

#### **ATTENDANCE**

- The peer jury meets the first Wednesday of every month from September through June.
- Peer jury sessions begin promptly at 7:00pm and are usually over no later than 8:30pm depending on case load.
- It is essential that a peer juror attend as many meetings as possible. This is important because cases can not be heard if there are not enough jurors present.
- When jurors fail to attend, it is the responsibility of the juror to contact the detective/peer jury coordinator and inform them of their absence in advance.
- A peer juror, who misses three or more meetings without notifying the detective/peer jury coordinator, will be removed from the peer jury program.

#### **PEER JURY MISSION**

The purpose of the peer jury is not to determine the offender's guilt or innocence. The offender must admit guilt before he/she is allowed to appear before the peer jury. The peer jury's purpose is to provide a means for the young offender to account for his/her behavior to a group of his/her peers. Peer jurors should attempt to determine why the offender did what he/she did and how the offender can be helped to see that he/she did wrong.

In order to accomplish the above mission, peer jurors must have a good understanding of the facts of the case. To achieve this understanding, jurors may ask questions of the offender, his/her parents and the juvenile detective during the hearing of the case. Jurors should ask whatever questions they need to get a clear understanding of the facts. The following is a list of sample questions that a peer juror might ask during a case hearing.

**To the offender:**

- Explain in your words what happened.
- Have you ever done anything like this before?
- What was going through your mind before and during the event?
- Was peer pressure a factor?
- Were you punished/disciplined at home?
- If you were “grounded” exactly what does that mean in your family?
- Did you consider the consequences of your actions before acting?
- Are you sorry for what you did?
- Did you make restitution for any damages that were caused?
- Did you apologize?
- How do your parent(s) feel about what was done?
- How do you perform in school?
- Are you involved in any school activities or clubs?

**To the parent(s)/guardian:**

- How do you feel about what your child has done?
- Was he/she punished at home?
- Has he/she been in trouble before?
- Are there other siblings? If so, how is this child influencing them?
- Have you told your child how you feel about what happened?

## **PEER JURY OPERATIONS**

- Each peer jury meeting begins with the hearing of offenders who are returning to the peer jury to be released after completing their “sentence” or requirements. The returning offender will be called before the peer jury and present the necessary documents to the panel. The panel may decide to ask the offender questions about their community service.
- After all returning cases have been heard, new cases are called.

## **NEW CASE CALL**

- The peer jury coordinator escorts the offender and his/her parent(s) into the jury room.
- The parents are directed to sit at assigned seats in the back of the room, while the offender is directed to step before the peer jury panel.
- The moderator ascertains the identity of the offender and some basic information
- The moderator asks the juvenile detective to read aloud the facts of the case
- The moderator then opens up the panel to ask the offender any questions about the incident.
- When the panel is satisfied that all questions have been answered, the offender and his/her parents are dismissed to the lobby pending peer jury deliberation.
- After deliberation, the offender and his/her parent(s) are returned to the room and the offender once again stands before the peer jury panel.
- The moderator announces the decision of the entire jury and directs the offender to the proper paperwork that must be completed.
- The offender is reminded of his/her responsibility to the peer jury to complete the assignment by the return date.
- The offender and parent(s) leave the room.
- The jury continues the process until all of the cases are heard.

## RELEASE PROCEDURE

- The offender and parent(s) are brought into the room, and the offender faces the panel.
- The offender hands over the necessary documents from his/her community service site.
- The moderator will review the documents of the offender's work and attitude which were received from the assigned community service agency.
- The moderator will give the panel members a chance to ask the offender any questions.
- At the moderator's discretion, the offender is released.
- The offender and his/her parent(s) leave the room.

## Peer Jury Behavior

It is important that the offender and his/her parent(s) or guardian take the peer jury seriously. This will only happen if he/she sees that the jurors are taking the proceedings seriously. The following rules of conduct, if followed by all jurors, will ensure a dignified and serious attitude concerning the peer jury proceedings.

- All jurors hearing a case should be seated when the offender enters the room.
- All jurors not on the panel should be seated together in a designated area of the room.
- There should be no joking, socializing, laughing, etc. while the offender is in the room. In the presence of the offender, all jurors should adopt a business-like demeanor.
- Jurors should not be chewing gum while hearing a case.
- Once a case begins, no one should leave or enter the room until the offender is excused for jury deliberations.
- The moderator must keep the proceedings moving along. If this is not done, the moderator should say, "This line of questioning is not relevant. Let's move on to something else."
- Deliberations should be thoughtful and careful but also expeditious. A juror should take the time he/she needs to make a good decision, but should not dawdle.
- Jurors should pay attention to special instructions before hearing the case and during deliberations.
- Most important, **all** proceedings of the peer jury **must** be kept in the strictest confidence. A juror must **never** discuss a peer jury case outside of the peer jury meeting.



**ARLINGTON HEIGHTS POLICE DEPARTMENT**

200 E. Sigwalt Street  
Arlington Heights, Illinois 60005-1499  
(847)368-5300

**PEER JURY PROGRAM JUROR APPLICATION FORM**

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

BIRTH DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL: \_\_\_\_\_ GRADE: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE#: \_\_\_\_\_  Home or Cell phone (circle one)  
(Where you can be reached if peer jury gets canceled)

**RETURN TO: Peer Jury Coordinator/Juvenile Investigations  
#847-368-5348**

**\*\*\* If you are applying in the middle of the school year, you may not be contacted until August of the next school year. \*\*\***

Please **handwrite** on the back of this form a brief paragraph about why you want to be a peer juror.



**ARLINGTON HEIGHTS POLICE DEPARTMENT**

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**PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT LETTER**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Your son/daughter has expressed an interest in becoming a Peer Juror. This program is under the auspices of local police departments. Jurors hear cases in which the offender has admitted guilt to committing an offense. Peer Jury cases are recommended by the responsible officer. The offender and his/her parent or guardian must sign a consent form to have the case placed before the Peer Jury.

Hearings will be once a month. They are held at the Arlington Heights Police Department. Please sign the form below if you agree to let your son/daughter participate in the program. Have your son/daughter return this application to the Peer Jury Coordinator at the Arlington Heights Police Department.

Please feel free to contact the Peer Jury Coordinator if you have any questions concerning this program.

My son/daughter \_\_\_\_\_ has my permission to  
(Name)

participate in the Peer Jury Program.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/ Guardian Signature

Phone # (Circle One)  Home  Cell

**Please return to Peer Jury Coordinator/Juvenile Investigations**

**#847-368-5348**