

State of South Carolina
Thirteenth Judicial Circuit

W. WALTER WILKINS, Solicitor



Solicitor's Diversion Programs

Dear Parents and Guardians:

This letter is written to provide information to parents who have a son/daughter currently involved in the criminal justice system. Confidentiality laws prohibit us from discussing specific cases, but the information provided below answers our most frequently asked questions about our diversion programs, which includes Pretrial Intervention (PTI) and the Alcohol Education Program (AEP).

Why can't I help my son/daughter with this process? They don't know how to handle things like this.

All participants in PTI and AEP have been charged as adults. Therefore, it is extremely important for the participant to take responsibility for the choices that put him/her in this situation. All requirements of the program and appointments are provided to participants *in writing*. Encourage your son/daughter to share these documents with you.

My son/daughter didn't do anything wrong. They were just with the wrong crowd.

We do understand that some participants may be criminally charged for the poor choices made by their friends. However, participants need to understand that *they* are responsible for their choice of friends and activities, and we encourage them to develop an understanding of how those choices affect them and their families.

I don't know what these programs are supposed to do. How do they work?

The program provides rehabilitative services with the goal of deterring the defendant from committing future crimes. Successful completion of one of our diversion programs results in a "non-conviction" status for your son/daughter, and they do not have to go to court. Charges dismissed through PTI or AEP will remain on their record indefinitely unless the defendant applies for an expungement. The request for an expungement must be processed by the Solicitor's Office. Fees are governed by the South Carolina state legislature and are given at the time of application for expungement.

I can't afford to pay all of these fees. Who can I talk to about setting up a payment plan?

We strongly recommend that the financial burden of our diversion programs fall on the participant. Often, participants are more motivated to obtain employment if they know that their parents will not be paying the fees for them. When we see that the participant is employed and actively involved in paying the cost of the program, we will work with your son/daughter and their specific financial situation.

Participation in Pretrial Intervention and the Alcohol Education Program are privileges not a legal right. The Thirteenth Circuit Solicitor, W. Walter Wilkins, and his staff hope that all program participants take full advantage of the opportunities provided. Successful completion of a diversion program can greatly improve your son/daughter's chance for a life free from the burden of a criminal record.