



Federal Courts' National Educational Outreach that Involves, Informs, Inspires, and Ignites

CIVICS EDUCATION TOOLKIT

Developed by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts



Revised February 2025

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For More Information, Contact:
National Educational Outreach Manager [Rebecca Fanning](#)

Outreach Events

10 Points to Consider

Getting Started—From Concept to Evaluation

Here is a process that easily can be adapted and modified for use with local court events. It answers the question: How do we get started?

Two Initial Concerns That Organizers Have -- Transportation and Food

A Note About Transportation: Keep in mind that schools have a transportation budget for field trips and schools are placing more emphasis on the value of field trips. It is best to have a teacher request transportation at the beginning of the academic year, even if the program is planned for the spring. However, it is sometimes possible to successfully request a bus later in the year. Popular alternatives include in-person and virtual school visits so that students and judges don't have to travel. Almost one-third of the nation's students live in rural areas and some live at distances that make travel prohibitive.

A Note About Refreshments: Refreshments aren't a consideration in the distance learning environment. For in-person courtroom programs, schools don't expect or want students to be fed offsite. Food complicates the logistics at the courthouse and becomes a funding issue. Teachers, typically, need to have students return to school in time for lunch. The programs in the [educational resources section](#) of [uscourts.gov](#) are tailored to this schedule. The typical program start time is 9 a.m. with adjournment at noon.

1. Information-Gathering and Consultation

- **Contact** Rebecca Fanning for resources, court contacts, content experts, templates/examples, and potential partners who can contribute to conceptualizing and shaping a court program to ensure success early in the process. Rebecca Fanning often can develop a customized program that capitalizes on the talents of the court and the needs/interests of the audiences to achieve the court's desired educational objectives. That process was the genesis of [Civil Discourse and Difficult Decisions](#) and [Candid Conversations](#).
- **Review** suggested [Best Practices](#) posted on JNet.
- **Identify** and consult with courts that have similar programs posted in the [JNet Educational Outreach Catalog](#). Judges and court staff can share resources, agendas, best practices, and lessons learned.

2. Conceptualizing the Program

- **Write** a one-page program description outlining the concept, objectives, audiences, agenda, roles for volunteers, and anticipated outcomes. This informational piece is for judges, attorneys, court staff, and teachers to outline the program and what to expect. Teachers need it to share with their administration. **Contact** Rebecca Fanning for a template.
- **Share** the program description with a judge who might be a champion of the event and who would be willing to take it the appropriate decision-makers/supporters, e.g., the chief judge and/or the jurisdiction's outreach committee, if there is one.
- **Identify** the judge, the chambers contact, and the staff coordinator(s) who will be working together and set a schedule for implementation.

3. Partnership Considerations

- **Determine** what resources and volunteers are available from the Federal Bar Association – local chapter and national organization. The FBA has a [national commitment](#) to supporting federal courts' educational outreach/civics programs. Many chapters have a civics liaison who facilitates the connections among the chapter, the court, and local schools. Be sure to tap the FBA's specialty and affiliative bars (LGBTQ+, disability, and racial and ethnic bars). The FBA staff contact for these groups is [Yvonne Cockram](#).
- **Explore** the pluses, minuses, and appropriateness of reaching out to members of the [Civics Renewal Network](#). Rebecca Fanning was a founding member and can provide information, referrals, and context about these nonprofit, nonpartisan civics education organizations.

4. Audiences, Participants, and Venues

- **Determine** target audiences/participants from different communities and schools for participation, including Title 1 schools and after-school programs and activities. See the information on how to recruit schools.
- **Seek** teacher input for identifying and meeting the needs of students in the earliest planning stages.
- **Consider** the audiences/participants when selecting the venue. Offer programs in courtrooms, classrooms, and community gathering places to make them widely accessible.
- **Factor** in the demographics, needs, and interests of the audiences/participants when recruiting volunteers. Involve attorneys and non-attorneys inside and outside of the courts who are involved in the justice system.

5. Constructing the Program

- **Determine** the agenda, based on input from teachers and volunteers and content experts.
- **Make** the agenda highly interactive from the start. Participants should be moving, talking, interacting from the beginning of the program and throughout. See the agendas for programs in the educational resources section of uscourts.gov. Start with the **Activity Download** on the landing page of each program. [Civil Discourse and Difficult Decisions](#) is an example.

6. Orientation Meeting

- **Only one meeting** is required with the judge, the attorneys, and the non-attorney volunteers in the program. It is a 30-minute, virtual orientation to go through the program materials, agenda, and roles. In advance of the meeting, participants need to spend only 30 minutes reading the materials that are posted with the program on <uscourts.gov> in the **Activity Download**. [Civil Discourse and Difficult Decisions](#) is an example. All materials posted in the **Activity Download** are in Word so that they can easily be modified and changed, as needed.
- **Time Commitment.** For the host judge and volunteers, it is 30 minutes reading the program materials on <uscourts.gov>; 30 minutes for the virtual orientation meeting; and three hours for the event if it is Civil Discourse and Difficult Decisions program. All other programs require less time.

7. Budget Considerations

- **Set** the program duration and timing to minimize costs – 9 a.m. to Noon is ideal for most schools.
 - **Food.** Schools don't expect food. They need to have students return to school before lunch, making it unnecessary to provide refreshments. Food is not expected at these educational programs that are no more than three hours, and food is not allowed in courtrooms.
 - **Transportation.** Most schools have a transportation budget for field trips. However, it is important for teachers to put in their request at the beginning of the school year, regardless of when the field trip is scheduled.
 - **No-Budget Options.** For schools that do not have transportation funds or that have other obstacles, such as distance from the courthouse, that prevent a court visit, programs can be brought to schools/classrooms in person and virtually.

8. Covering the Event to Heighten Visibility

- **Create** a list of internal and external communication platforms and outlets that are available and appropriate for increasing the visibility of the program. Coverage can broaden the impact of educational outreach efforts.
- **Photos and Video. Photography.** Ask a court employee who is an experienced photographer to take photos at the event and provide them to the Office of Public Affairs for X posts, <uscourts.gov> and JNet coverage. Refer to the tips on [JNet](#) for taking the kinds of photos that are needed. **Videography.** Ask a court employee who is an experienced videographer to videotape events. See the tips on JNet for videotaping. On occasion, a video kit can be borrowed from the video production service in the Office of Public Affairs. Ask Rebecca Fanning for information. **Timing.** Photos and videos should be sent as soon as possible to the Office of Public Affairs for possible use on the federal judiciary's [X account](#), <uscourts.gov>, and [JNet](#).
- **External Communication.** Start with Rebecca Fanning to get ideas for developing a media advisory if advance publicity is desired; and/or a news release for the day of the event; and/or a timely X post. The information on [JNet](#) gives an overview of the services the Office of Public Affairs can provide.
- **Internal Communication.** Write an item for internal newsletters and other forms of communication with the court community in the district and circuit.

9. Feedback and Evaluation

- **Collecting Comments.** At the end of each program, before adjournment, participants and volunteers fill out a feedback form created by the host court or provided by Rebecca Fanning.
- **Debriefing.** For immediate feedback from the volunteers, it is recommended that they debrief with the court staff coordinator in the courtroom right after the event to talk about what went well and what should be modified. It is helpful to get this feedback right after the program when impressions are fresh. The court coordinator can document the lessons learned and incorporate them, as appropriate, into planning the next event.
- **Synthesizing.** Within a few days of the event and the debriefing, the local coordinator can synthesize the comments and circulate them to the judge and volunteers. The feedback is often very rewarding for the volunteers and motivates them to continue their participation.

10. Review the Checklist and Evaluations for Next Time

- **Modify** this and other checklists, as well as the feedback forms in order to create tools that will make the next event easier and even more effective.



For More Information, Contact:
National Educational Outreach Manager [Rebecca Fanning](#)

Circuit-Wide Educational Outreach Committees

Characteristics of Three Circuit Committees—2023

Educational Outreach Committees, generally, develop their jurisdiction’s objectives, programming priorities, focus, and approach to public education about the courts. They set the direction and yearly theme or emphasis and identify audiences they wish to reach. Committees communicate outreach activities to judges, court personnel, bar association partners (FBA). They encourage and publicize activities. The Ninth Circuit’s [Public Information & Community Outreach Committee \(PICO\)](#) was established in 2000. The Second Circuit’s [The Honorable Robert A. Katzmann Justice for All: Courts and Community Initiative](#) got underway in 2016. The Sixth Circuit’s [Connections: You, Your Courts, Your Democracy](#), which is a hybrid of the two models, was formed in 2020.

	Second Circuit	Ninth Circuit	Sixth Circuit
Committee Name	Justice for All: Courts and the Community	Public Information & Community Outreach Committee (PICO)	Civics and Outreach Committee
Leadership	Co-Chairs: COA Judge Joseph Bianco and District Judge Victor Marrero	Chair: District Judge John Kronstadt	Co-Chairs: District Judges Curtis Collier and Michael Newman
Role	Create and implement programs	Promote existing programs conducted in courts	Be the central point of contact for civics in the Circuit
Structure	Nine program committees	Committee of the whole	Committee of the whole
Committee Members	On each committee: ~4 judges and 5-6 advisors (lawyers, civics educators)	17 members and 2 ex officio: judges, lawyers, staff, and media	7 judges: COA, District, Bankruptcy
Target Audiences	Students, teachers, adults	Students, teachers, adults, media	Middle school and high school teachers and students
Flagship Circuit-Wide Event(s)	Constitution Day	Annual Circuit-Wide Essay and Video Contest	Constitution Day; Commentary Pieces; Classroom Visits
Website Features	Circuit activity calendar News and announcements Program descriptions Annual report	Circuit activity calendar News and announcements Program descriptions Annual report	Connections: You, Your Courts, Your Democracy Educational resources Commentary pieces
Learning Centers	NYC	Sacramento and San Diego	Not yet
Meetings	Quarterly, 60-min. meeting/ conference call	In-person meetings several times a year	Periodic



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GETTING STARTED

HOW TO REACH AND RECRUIT SCHOOLS FOR FEDERAL COURT PROGRAMS

The Problem

How do I make schools aware of court programs so that they can participate in them? Whom should I contact? What if they don't respond? What about transportation? And lunch?

The Top Tips

- Get Input from Dynamic Teachers.
- Cast a Wide Net with an Email, then Take the Initiative to Follow Up.
- Have a Table or Panel of Judges at a Social Studies Meeting or Conference.
- **If the local chapter of the Federal Bar Association is active, contact the president. Ask if there is a civics liaison. Many chapters have someone who will connect schools and courts and handle some of the logistics.**

A Note About Transportation: Schools have a transportation budget for field trips. It is best to have a teacher request transportation at the beginning of the academic year, even if the program is planned for the spring. However, it often is possible to successfully request a bus later in the year.

A Note About Refreshments: For in-person courtroom programs, schools don't expect refreshments. Food complicates the logistics at the courthouse and becomes a funding issue. Teachers, typically, need to have students return to school in time for lunch. The programs in the educational resources section of [uscourts.gov](#) are tailored to this schedule. The typical program start time is 9 a.m. with adjournment at noon.

For Quick Results, Start Here

Most school districts have a social studies coordinator, a social studies specialist, or a social studies curriculum specialist. You will find this person on the school district's website. They maintain an e-mail list of all social studies teachers in the school district and communicate regularly with them. Ask if you can put an announcement in the next e-mail to teachers. Also reach out to career counselors and Career and Technical Education (CTE) directors.

Ask for Input from Dynamic Teachers

How to Reach Teachers Who Will Make It Happen

The following sections list sources that know the social studies landscape and the dynamic teachers in your state.

Center for Civic Education – State Coordinators – Very Responsive

State coordinators of the [We the People](#) program communicate regularly with teachers about social studies enrichment opportunities for educators and their students. Courts consistently get good results. [Find your state coordinator.](#)

Cast a Wide Net: Contact Your State Department of Education

State departments of education have a social studies specialist, who is the statewide point person.

[Find yours in this directory.](#)

Most school districts have a social studies coordinator, a social studies specialist, or a social studies curriculum specialist. You will find this person on the school district's website.

Districts have several professional development days throughout the academic year. Ask the school district's social studies specialist how to get on the program and/or host the program at the courthouse where you can give a presentation. They maintain an email list of all social studies teachers in the state or the school district and communicate regularly with them. Ask if you can put announcements in the specialist's newsletter or other communication vehicles.

Put Out the Welcome Mat

Write a Blanket Email Announcement

To ensure that every school has equal access, send a message to social studies teachers on the state's social studies email list. See the form letter [toward the bottom of this page](#) on the Federal Bar Association's civics outreach section.

This letter, written by Judge Michael Newman, Southern District of Ohio, when he was president of the Federal Bar Association, got an 80 percent response rate from schools in Dayton, OH. Over time, this contact led to a partnership between the judge and the Dayton public schools' social studies specialist that opened many doors.

If You Don't Get a Response, Follow Up

It's common for school districts and schools not to respond. When that happens, call the district or school office to get advice on how to proceed, then send another e-mail and copy the person with whom you spoke.

Be Visible: Present at a Nearby Social Studies Conference

If You Want to Make a Presentation to Teachers – Start Here

The National Council for the Social Studies has state, and regional affiliates that, typically, host the largest gatherings of social studies teachers in each state.

[Go to this listing.](#) When you find your state, click on About to find the names of board members near you. Someone on that list can advise you which conference to participate in, the value and logistics of setting up an exhibit table, and how to offer to make a presentation. You can also ask your state's social studies specialist for recommendations.



For More Information, Contact:
National Educational Outreach Manager [Rebecca Fanning](#)

CHECKLIST

Teachers Institutes: Getting Started

Teachers institutes typically range from a half-day to a five-day format.

Consult with Court-Run Teachers Institutes

- [Eastern District of Missouri](#) – Rachel Marshall
- [Southern District of Indiana](#) – Mary Giorgio
- [Southern District of New York](#) – Alana Chill
- [Eastern District of California](#) – Kari Kelso
- [Central District of California](#) – Pamela Gamble Jackson
- [District of Idaho](#) – Amy Tate
- [Western District of Washington](#) – Emily Nero
- [Eastern District of Washington](#) – Jennifer Harris
- [District of Montana](#) – Shannon Sanderson-Moyle
- [District of Columbia](#) – Rebecca Fanning
- [Northern District of Illinois](#) – Lauren Thiel
- [Roundup of 2022 Institutes](#)
- [Roundup of 2020 Institutes](#)

Partner with External Teachers Institutes

- [ABA Listing of Summer Institutes](#)
- [Federal Judicial Center Summer Institute](#)
- [Streetlaw, Inc: Supreme Court Summer Institute](#)
- [Library of Congress: Professional Development](#)
- [National Archives: Civics for All of US](#)
- [Smithsonian Summer Institutes for Teachers](#)
- [Civics Renewal Network Partner Organizations](#)
- [Teach for America](#)
- **(Name the State) Center for Law-Related Education**
Example: [Ohio Center for Law-Related Education](#)

Planning Checklist

- Identify Judge Champion and Staff Coordinator
- Alert Rebecca Fanning for Resources/Contacts
- Identify Models/Partners
- Consult with Other Courts
- Form Partnerships with External Organizations
- Get Teachers' Input
- Identify Target Teacher Audiences
- Select Theme and Topics
- Prepare Budget/Get Approval
- Create Agenda
- Reserve Venue and Plan Logistics
- Arrange Photography/Video
- Invite Faculty
- Tap FBA or Other Bar Associations to Help Recruit Teachers
- Develop Promotion Plan Based on Teacher Input
- Execute Promotion Plan
- Accept Registrations and E-Mail Logistics
- Conduct Rehearsal or Walk Through
- Host Event
- Evaluate
- Follow Up
- Document Lessons Learned for Planning Next Event



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Court Camps: Getting Started

Court camps typically range from a half-day to a five-day format. However, the Wisconsin camp is 12 weeks and has an ongoing mentorship component. Camps provide an immersion experience at a courthouse and expose diverse students to careers in the law. [View a video of the first court camp.](#)

Consult with Court-Run Court Camps

- **Second Circuit**—justiceforall@ca2.uscourts.gov
 - New York: [Central Islip, Brooklyn and Manhattan](#)
 - Connecticut: [Hartford](#)
- **Fifth Circuit**
 - Louisiana: [New Orleans](#)
 - Texas: [Laredo](#)
- **Eighth Circuit**
 - Minnesota: [Minneapolis-St. Paul](#)
Contact: CourtCamp@mnd.uscourts.gov
- **Seventh Circuit**
 - Wisconsin: [Milwaukee](#)
Contact: SYI@marquette.edu
- [Roundup of 2023 Court Camps](#)

Partner with Bar Associations and/or Law Schools

- Some Federal Bar Association chapters take the lead in organizing a court camp. Find the FBA liaison at your local chapter by contacting [Andrew Loewenstein](#)
- A law school that partners with a court: [Touro Law Center](#)
- Contact the founder of the first Court Camp: 2nd Circuit COA [Judge Joseph Bianco](#)

Planning Checklist

- Identify Judge Champion and Staff Coordinator
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- Consult with Other Courts
- Form Partnerships with External Organizations
- Get Teachers' Input
- Identify Target Student Audiences/Schools
- Select Theme and Topics
- Prepare Budget/Get Approval
- Create Agenda
- Reserve Venue and Plan Logistics
- Arrange Photography/Video
- Invite Faculty
- Tap FBA or Other Bar Associations to Help Recruit Schools/Students
- Develop Promotion Plan
- Execute Promotion Plan
- Accept Registrations and E-Mail Logistics
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ACTIVITY

50-Minute Civics

CANDID CONVERSATIONS

Sample Springboard Topic: The Bill of Rights in Your Life

This 50-minute Candid Conversation is based on a three-minute video: [Students Sound Off About the Bill of Rights](#). It is a question-formulation activity, described here, that is ready for immediate use virtually or in-person in courtrooms and classrooms. All materials are provided here and in the links.

Note: Bill of Rights Day is December 15, but it is celebrated throughout the month and the topic is evergreen throughout the year. Candid Conversations can be conducted anytime without a topic or theme to give students an opportunity to ask questions and raise concerns.

Candid Conversations Activity: What's on Your Mind About the Bill of Rights in Your Life?

This activity opens with showing a three-minute, thought-provoking, discussion-starter video [Students Sound Off About the Bill of Rights](#). The video prompts students to think about an Amendment that has a significant impact on their lives. The video is followed by a question-formulation activity that sets the stage for students to get invested and involved in critical thinking and question-asking with the visiting judge and attorney volunteers. Sometimes the judge appears solo and sometimes with two attorney volunteers. The activity can be facilitated by the judge or by one of the attorneys.

Objectives

- To give students the opportunity to interact with federal judges and increase their understanding of, and confidence in, the federal courts.
- To give students experience with legal skills as practical life skills: 1) forming and asking questions and 2) engaging in civil inquiry and discussion on controversial issues with peers and adults.
- To expose students to role models and careers – some that require a law degree and some that do not – in the courts and legal community so that they can see themselves in such roles.
- To give students the experience of claiming their personal stake in the Bill of Rights and the role of the courts in preserving the Bill of Rights.

Roles

- One Federal Judge: Circuit, District, Magistrate or Bankruptcy
- One Facilitator (Can be the Judge or an Attorney Volunteer)
- Optional: Two Attorneys, or an Attorney and Non-Attorney Court Professional.

Activity Overview

- Participants: High school, community college, university, and law school students
- Teacher/Student Preparation: None
- Judge/Lawyer Preparation: 15 minutes reviewing the video and this tip sheet; 10 minutes meeting to go over the agenda and roles.
- Activity Duration: 50 minutes – one class period. Can be extended to 90-minute class.
- Location: Virtual learning space, courtrooms, or classrooms.
- Centerpiece Resource: 3-Minute Discussion-Starter Video – [Students Sound Off About the Bill of Rights](#)

Distribute the Handouts. Give participants a one-page list of the [Bill of Rights](#). Because students are most likely to show interest in the [First Amendment](#) and [Fourth Amendment](#), two handouts focus on these Amendments. The statements in these two documents can be asked as questions of the students. Word clouds for the First Amendment and the Fourth Amendment are springboards for students' questions. Click on the word cloud in the top right corner of each web page and print the image.

The Bill of Rights in Your Life: 50-Minute Candid Conversation with a Federal Judge or a Judge, an Attorney, and a Non-Attorney Court Professional

(5 min)

For the Judge and Two Volunteers: Introduce Yourself with Your Heart Reason for Choosing the Law. The judge briefly explains the role of a judge and gives a quick overview of the types of cases federal judges hear. Perhaps, mention a high-profile or historical case heard in their courthouse.

The Facilitator: Tell the students that they will 1) watch a brief video; 2) then break up into two groups to develop questions; 3) get back into the large group for a Q/A session and conversation with the judge and lawyers.

(15 min)

Show [Students Sound Off About the Bill of Rights](#) (Video - 3 minutes)

- Have students work in pairs to brainstorm questions on the First Amendment or the Fourth Amendment

Directions:

- Student pairs underline key phrases in their Amendment.
- They brainstorm and write down all the questions they can think of about their Amendment and its impact on their lives as teens.
- An adult or student writes the questions on a flip chart, if available. Otherwise, students write their questions on sticky notes and puts them on a wall.

(15 min)

Facilitated Candid Conversation with the Entire Group

After the pairs have posted their questions, the facilitator calls on students to raise their questions with the group. The judge may answer some questions, refer others to the volunteers, and seek input from the students. To get through as many questions as possible, only one or two adults comment on each question.

This is not a lecture format. To keep the students engaged, the facilitator may decide to first ask students to volunteer to answer a question, then ask the judge. The judge builds on the students' questions and responses to make educational points, rather than using a lecture format.

(10 min)

Open Floor for General Questions on Any Topic

The adults encourage questions about students' rights, the Bill of Rights and the courts, careers in the legal field, and issues that are of concern to students. The judge may open discussion on a topic by saying: "I'm often asked about" Or "Does anyone wonder about"

(5 min)

Wrap Up

The judge or facilitator asks students to write down on a piece of paper one thing they learned about the Bill of Rights, the courts, or careers in the courts during the session. The teacher collects the comments and gives them to the judge and attorney volunteers.

Adjourn.



For More Information, Contact:
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ACTIVITY

Legal Skills as Life Skills

Civil Discourse and Difficult Decisions

Civil Discourse and Difficult Decisions is a [national initiative of the federal courts](#) that brings high school, community college, university, and law school students into federal courthouses to participate in realistic legal proceedings. These court hearings (not mock trials) are realistic simulations that showcase jury deliberations in which all students and learning styles participate in civil discourse. Jury deliberations in open court are the program's centerpiece.

The program, launched in 2016 in [courtroom settings](#), uses fictional scenarios superimposed on landmark Supreme Court cases. Examples include *Tinker v. Des Moines* translated into a campus protest; *Elonis v. United States* applied to a social media cyberbullying incident; *New Jersey v. TLO* as a backpack search for a ringing cell phone in class.

The hearing is presided over by a federal judge, assisted by attorney volunteers. Students sit on the bench with the judge and ask questions of the student attorneys arguing the case who are coached by the volunteers. Student jurors deliberate and come to a decision.

Time Commitment

- **Judge and Lawyers.** In advance of the event, they spend 30-45 minutes reading the courtroom-ready program materials posted on [uscourts.gov](#); participate in one, 30-minute, virtual orientation meeting with the judge to go over the agenda and roles; and participate in the three-hour courtroom simulation at the courthouse.
- **Teachers and Students.** No classroom preparation or pre-reading for the students or teachers. All preparation is incorporated into the courtroom program at the event.

Learning Objectives – Benefits to Students

Students leave the program with sharpened tools for civil discourse and decision-making and a heightened awareness of situations they may not realize can have legal and long-term consequences. They also experience the differences between media portrayals of the court system and real-life courtroom dynamics. Participants interact with the human faces of the justice system – judges, attorneys, and other professionals with and without law degrees. Their courtroom experience motivates them to serve willingly on juries when called.

Roles and Resources

Students. All students have a role – as active jurors, lawyers, and judges.

Adults. A federal judge presides over the simulation. An attorney volunteer facilitates the program and the jury deliberations; and volunteer attorneys prepare the student attorneys and jurors. **Resources.** The agenda, resources, and roles are available as online handouts that easily can be modified and printed. They include detailed guidance. The ready-to-use handouts are found in the Activity Download in the upper right corner of the program landing page. Here are all of the program materials for each case.

- **Volunteer Attorney Coaches Prepare Two Student Attorney Teams and the Jury.** The attorney coaches for each team take their students into separate rooms to prepare them to argue their side of the case. There is a scripted opening protocol and suggested talking points that students can read during the arguments or refer to, as they wish. While the student attorneys are preparing, volunteers take the jurors in the courtroom through an issue-spotting worksheet and have them write questions the judge will ask the student attorneys from the bench. The presiding judge works with the student judges to develop questions they will ask the student attorneys. After the preparation period, everyone returns to the courtroom and the arguments begin.
- **Protocol and the Order of Speakers are Set Out in the Handouts for the Attorneys and Judges.** Student attorneys make their respective cases, and the presiding judge and student judges ask them questions, including questions submitted by the jurors.
- **After the Arguments, the Jurors Deliberate in Open Court and the Judges Retire to the Presiding Judge's Chambers to Make Their Decision. The attorney facilitator guides the deliberations only to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to speak.** Due to time constraints, the verdict is a show-of-hands vote that does not have to be unanimous. When the presiding judge and student judges return to the courtroom, the judge asks several students to explain their positions and then turns to the student judges to talk about their rationale.
- **The Hearing Concludes with Feedback from the Judge.** The judge, or attorneys or probation officers facilitate a discussion of the Reality Check Quiz. That is followed by an open-floor Q/A session on careers and any other topic.

What Happens in the Courtroom Program?

Roles

- **One Federal Judge:** Circuit, District, Magistrate or Bankruptcy Presides Over the Hearing
- **One Facilitator (Attorney Volunteer):** Manages the Program and Facilitates Jury Deliberations
- **Two Attorney Coaches:** One for Each Student Attorney Team
- **Two Attorney Coaches:** Facilitate the Jury Preparation Activities
- **Two Non-Attorney Court Professionals:** Introduce Themselves and Their Careers

Agenda Overview

1. Icebreakers: Reality Check Quiz and Civility Self-Reflection Tool

While waiting for the program to start, students take an attention-getting Reality Check Quiz that tests their knowledge of situations that can put them in legal jeopardy. At the end of the program, they discuss the issues with the host judge and leave with insights that have practical applications in their lives.

Introductions – Heart Reason. The attorneys, the non-attorney volunteers, and the judge take 2-3 minutes each to give their heart reason for choosing their career. This is an experience, insight, emotional moment, not a resume or career-path recitation.

2. Civil Discourse Skill Building

This facilitator-guided activity has two parts: 1) Students use a self-reflection tool to become aware of and discuss their own civil discourse attitudes, behaviors, and language, and 2) Students establish their own ground rules and group norms for civil discussion.

3. Courtroom Simulation

The program is not a mock trial. It is a modified courtroom simulation that is a hybrid of appellate arguments and jury deliberations designed to create opportunities for all students and learning styles to participate.

- Judge and Attorneys Give their Heart Reason for Choosing the Law.
- Non-Lawyer Court Personnel Describe Their Jobs and Satisfactions.
- Attorney Volunteers Prepare Student Jurors, Attorneys. Judge Prepares Judges.
- Student Attorneys Argue. Student Judges and Presiding Judge Ask Questions.
- Jurors Deliberate in Open Court. Judges Consult with Presiding Judge.
- Presiding Judge Takes the Verdict and Judges' Decision
- Students Discuss Reality Check Quiz and Issues That Arise from It.
- Judge and Attorneys Take Questions on Careers and Any Other Topic

4. Reality Check Discussion

The program uses the Reality Check Quiz to stimulate reality-based observations and lessons in a candid conversation with the host judge about real-life teen situations that can derail a student's future.

5. Q/A with the Host Judge

As the Reality Check discussion winds down, the judge opens the floor to student questions on any topic. The judge sets the stage for a candid conversation about students' concerns and interests. This component is a highly rated part of the program, according to the evaluations that students fill out before leaving the event.