

# spartanburg county **CRIMINAL JUSTICE** youth institute

*A Partnership of the Clerk of Court and The Spartanburg County Foundation*

## **Institute Overview**

### **Purpose**

In response to recent tragedies across the country, Spartanburg County Clerk of Court and The Spartanburg County Foundation are partnering together to launch the Spartanburg County Criminal Justice Youth Institute. This four-month leadership training program is designed to introduce Spartanburg County 11th-12th graders to the criminal justice system to help them gain a deeper understanding of the inner-workings of the system, eliminate misconceptions, build long-lasting partnerships between youth and criminal justice officials, and empower Spartanburg County youth to become positive contributors and leaders in our community.

The Institute begins in January with an opening retreat that provides an opportunity for participants to connect with one another in an informal setting and hear from an inspirational leader. Sessions are held January – April, one week day per month, from 8:30am – 12:30pm. A graduation ceremony is held in May.

### **Goals**

Modeled after The Spartanburg County Foundation's Grassroots Leadership Development Institute, participants of the Spartanburg County Criminal Justice Youth Institute are equipped with resources and a better understanding of the Criminal Justice System, enabling them to:

- Understand their rights as individuals as well as the consequences of poor decision-making
- Be a resource for other youth who have questions about the inner-workings of the Criminal Justice System
- Share their knowledge with others about the importance of making positive choices
- Help dispel any misconceptions
- Form long-lasting relationships and partnerships with criminal justice officials
- Further explore a career within the Criminal Justice System
- Assume individual and collective responsibility for positive change in their communities

### **Objectives**

The Spartanburg County Criminal Justice Youth Institute provides leadership training, education, and an opportunity to connect with other youth who are interested in making a positive difference in their communities. Throughout this leadership training, participants meet once a month for four months to increase their knowledge of the criminal justice system and gain a better understanding of the role they can play in partnering together with criminal justice officials, as well as the consequences of poor decision-making.

Topic sessions include: arrest, booking, hearings, pre-trial intervention, sentencing, probation, drug abuse, and legal aid. Participants will also gain exposure to state and federal delegation.

The sessions will be held at various locations throughout Spartanburg County, such as the Spartanburg County Courthouse, Spartanburg County Jail, Spartanburg City Hall, and Spartanburg County Sheriff's Office, providing students an opportunity to tour these facilities first-hand.

### **Participants**

Participation is open to any 11th-12th grader that attends a Spartanburg County public, private, or home school. Thirty-five students, including representatives from each of the seven Spartanburg County School Districts will be selected to participate. Participants come from diverse cultures and backgrounds with a desire to learn more about the Criminal Justice System and be a leader in his/her community.

Students will be selected to participate based on the following criteria:

- Must be a high school junior or senior attending a Spartanburg County public, private, or home school
- Have an interest in learning more about the Criminal Justice System
- Be willing to commit to help build long-lasting partnerships with criminal justice officials and be an advocate for making positive choices
- Have a desire to positively change their communities
- Academic merits and school involvement should not be a determining factor; rather, the Institute hopes to engage students of varying involvements, backgrounds, socioeconomic levels, and academic achievements
- Would benefit from learning more about the criminal justice system as well as the consequences of poor choices
- Must be committed to attending the opening retreat, all sessions, and the graduation ceremony

### **How to Apply**

Individuals interested in applying for the Institute may download an application by visiting [www.spcf.org](http://www.spcf.org) or [www.spartanburgcounty.org](http://www.spartanburgcounty.org). For all other questions, please contact The Spartanburg County Foundation at (864) 582.0138.

### **Partners**

Spartanburg County Clerk of Court partners with The Spartanburg County Foundation to bring this unique leadership program to Spartanburg County youth free of charge.

### **Alumni**

Each year, the 12<sup>th</sup> grade Institute graduates will have an opportunity to apply for a summer internship. This allows those individuals who are interested in exploring a possible career within criminal justice to gain first-hand experience working alongside leaders in this field. Additionally, 11<sup>th</sup> grade Institute graduates will have an opportunity to be elected by their class to serve on the Institute's Advisory Committee as a youth advisor.