

Neighborhood Court

Participant Legal Rights

- 1. The program is voluntary:** It is your decision whether to participate.
- 2. You do not need to discuss your case:** You should not say anything about your arrest or case to anyone until you have decided to participate.
- 3. If you have legal questions, you can call a lawyer:** You can hire an attorney to advise you. If you cannot afford an attorney, you can call the Public Defender's Office at 831-429-1311.
- 4. It is possible that your case may still be dismissed even if you do not participate:** The District Attorney is offering you the option to go through Neighborhood Court instead of having your case go through the criminal justice system. What this means:
 - For misdemeanors, you do not have to go through Criminal Court if you go through Neighborhood Court.
 - For infractions, you do not have to go through Traffic Court if you go through Neighborhood Court.
- 5. To participate in this process, you must take responsibility for the actions you were charged with.**
IF YOU WISH TO CONTEST THE CHARGES, YOUR MATTER WILL BE RETURNED TO CRIMINAL COURTS.
- 6. You have a right to a lawyer in criminal court:** If your misdemeanor case is prosecuted in criminal court and you cannot afford an attorney, one will be appointed to defend you.
- 7. The conference is confidential:** It is a discussion with residents in a community setting designed to address crime. The content of this discussion is confidential and will not be used in a criminal court proceeding.
- 8. Arrest records are separate from this process:** After you have fulfilled all the obligations at Neighborhood Court, your case will be dismissed, you will not have a conviction on your record and no further criminal proceedings associated with this case will be initiated.
- 9. Neighborhood Court does not discriminate** on the bases of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, and/or age.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

If you would like additional information about Neighborhood Court, please call (831)-454-2534. You may also visit our website at <https://datinternet.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/>, or email us, neighborhoodcourts@santacruzcounty.us.