



The **mission** of the **Connecticut** Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities is to eliminate discrimination through civil and human rights law enforcement and to establish equal opportunity and justice for all persons within the state through advocacy and education.

KCA is an outgrowth of the CT Kids Court Program

History of Kids Court

In 1993, then UConn Law School students, Cheryl Sharp and Rae Thiesfield, developed and launched the first Kids Court Competition in the Greater Hartford area to educate students about social justice, diversity and civil and human rights issues.

The competition, which has been recognized nationally and locally, now sponsored by the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities still runs to this day. CT Kids Court Academy is an outgrowth of CT Kids Court. Tens of thousands of students have participated in Kids Court and the hope is that thousands of additional students will benefit from this pipeline program-KCA.

CHRO Executive Director Attorney Tanya A. Hughes

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The State of CT Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, the CT Bar Association and the Educational Working Group of the Department of Justice are co-sponsoring:

The State of CT

KIDS COURT ACADEMY (KCA)

An Attorney and social justice pipeline program for middle and high school students

Applications should be emailed to the attention of Attorney Cheryl A. Sharp at Cheryl.Sharp@ct.gov

The Ct Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities in cooperation with state and federal partners is co-sponsoring the CT Kids Court Academy. This attorney pipeline program is an outgrowth of the CT Kids Speak and Kids Court Competition developed on the campus of UCONN Law School in 1993.

What is CT Kids Court Academy?

CT Kids Court Academy is a pipeline program to develop interest in youth regarding civil and human rights law.

What is the focus of Kids Court Academy?

The focus of the program is civil and human rights law enforcement and social justice. The Program is designed to raise the social consciousness of youth regarding civil and human rights law in a series of one hour sessions where students will explore the law, its effects and power through attorney guidance and peer exercises and interaction.

What are the objectives of Kids Court Academy?

- To support the development of youth leadership and develop their interest in the law by exposing them to the law early
- To reduce discrimination and prejudice by having students participate in the program from rural, urban and suburban areas
- To create a pipeline for CT law schools
- To inspire the next generation of change agents and civil rights leaders
- To offer an after school activity that will serve as academic enrichment, as well as recreational fun
- To provide an opportunity for youth to elevate their voices
- To expose youth to legislative and law-making processes

Program Description

The Program is 18 weeks and will feature attorneys, law students, investigators and other civil rights and social justice professionals, who will present and do an activity with the student participants on a bi-weekly basis for one hour. The bi-weekly meetings will be remote and held through Teams or Zoom initially.

Eligibility

Students are eligible to apply for the Academy if they are in middle school (6th-8th grade) or high school (9th-12th grade) in Connecticut. Students will be eligible to participate in the Academy from year to year, once accepted, until they graduate from the Program.

Attendance

In order to get the greatest benefit from the Academy, attendance is required. The Program is eighteen weeks. Students may not miss more than 3 weeks of the Academy or they will be in danger of being removed from the Program.

When does it start?

Kids Court Academy begins on **Tuesday April 6, 2021**. The Program will run from 2:55-4:00 via a Teams platform. The Academy will run every other Tuesday with the exception of Holidays and scheduled days off. A complete calendar will be released to all participants.

Application

Teachers may register a block of students. Individual student must send an application with your first and last name, grade, school name, email address and a paragraph as to why you are interested in civil rights and or social justice to **Cheryl.Sharp@ct.gov**

Eligible students from the Boys and Girls Club of Hartford and the Thelonious Monk Center in New Haven have already been admitted.