

**BLUEPRINT FOR PLANNING
A "SO YOU'RE 18" PANEL DISCUSSION
FOR HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS & SENIORS**

A program sponsored by the Conference of Local Bar Associations (CLBA)

1. Obtain a resolution from your local bar association agreeing to put on a "So You're 18" panel discussion before local high school juniors and seniors. This can be done either at a regular meeting of the bar association or by having the president of the bar send out a letter declaring an intent to put on the program and calling for objections and comments. If there are no objections, do the program. If there are objections or other reasons to have a formal meeting, postpone action on the program until the next regular bar meeting.
2. Once the bar has agreed to go forward, contact the local principals of the High Schools involved and work out a date and time to have the program. Usually 1 to 1½ hours are sufficient and the school auditorium is the ideal place to have the program. Always involve the principal or assistant principal in the introduction of the program and have him or her present during the program to insure that things move along in an orderly way. The principal or his assistant can also help with the setting up of the panel table, microphone, etc. It is a good idea, for promotional purposes and for the local newspaper or news release, to have a banner prepared with the name of your local bar association on it. Stretch this across the stage or some other appropriate place so that it will be there for all to see.
3. Select your panel, mainly a matter of judgment, but include the local sheriff, police chief, commonwealth's attorney, defense attorney, someone familiar with social services, a local general district court Judge or juvenile and domestic court Judge and a moderator. It might also be a good idea to have the guidance counselor from the High School on the panel.
4. Provide a "So You're 18" handbook to each member of the panel and make sure you order enough to be distributed to students when the program is conducted. It is suggested that the handbooks be handed out to the students prior to the program, rather than at the end, so that the students will have an opportunity to develop questions while scanning the booklets.
5. Usually one organizational meeting for the panel is all that is necessary. Simply have the panel meet at a central location to divide up the contents of the book and agree on how the program is to be presented. You are only limited by your imagination as to how the program is to be conducted. Dividing the book and having each panel member discuss a segment is normally sufficient. The use of demonstrative aides or other tactics is an option which may be more attention-getting for the students. It is suggested that you use some imagination and make the program as entertaining as possible.

6. After the panel has discussed the handbook, leave time for questions from the audience.
7. It is probably a good idea to include juniors, as well as seniors, in the audience. It gives the juniors a running start on what will be facing them at the end of their senior year.
8. Call Ms. Paulette Davidson for information about the program and to order "So You're 18" handbooks. Ms. Davidson is the Virginia State Bar Liaison to the Conference of Local Bar Associations (CLBA), 707 East Main Street, Suite 1500, Richmond, Virginia 23219-2800, (804) 775-0521, davidson@vsb.org.