

Delaware County Probate/Juvenile Court

Judge David A. Hejmanowski

2023 Annual Report

Message from the Judge

A court's annual report is a story in statistics – a way of reporting, both for current observers, and for posterity, what is happening inside the courthouse during a fixed period in time. But it is also a way to monitor trends, adjust to changes, and plan for the future.

In Delaware County, this is a particularly challenging task because those trends also have to be viewed within the lens of the county's rapid and seemingly unceasing growth. Case numbers will continue to increase, and so raw data as to the number of filings, total delinquent acts, or instances of child abuse and neglect will continue to grow also. The statistics must also be viewed in the context of whether those case numbers are growing faster than the county's population.

This is an important question in light of the current narrative on juvenile delinquency. The immediate post-pandemic period has seen a substantial increase in media attention to delinquent acts, and an emerging narrative that juvenile delinquency is out of control.

The statistics do not bear this out. They do not bear it out locally, they do not bear it out statewide, and they do not bear it out nationally.

Yes, there are specific areas in which the state and nation have seen increases in both adult crime and juvenile delinquency. Offenses involving firearms have increased in both the juvenile and adult populations. Thefts of motor vehicles by juveniles have spiked in the past three years.

But overall, juvenile delinquency is at almost historic lows. In the early 1990s more than 60 youth out of 1,000 were the victim of robbery, violent sexual assault, or aggravated assault. In 2022, the last year for which national statistics are available, that number was 8.5 out of 1,000. In that same period, the number of victimizations for simple assault among youth dropped from 129 per 1,000 to just 19 out of 1,000. And while the number of arrests of youth for violent crime increased slightly in 2022, that number was less than 40,000 nationwide – a fraction of the more than 140,000 arrests of juveniles for violent crimes in 1995.

Case numbers in Delaware County, both in juvenile and probate court, continue to trend back to pre-pandemic numbers, or now exceed them in some categories. Those increases, and further growth in case filings, are to be expected as the county's population continues to soar. Now is the time to plan appropriately for the future and to ensure that our programming, our staffing, and our capacity to handle cases are adequate to meet our future needs. We are consistently working to ensure that we remain ahead of growth so that our level of service to the community is not impacted.

We hope that you find this annual report enlightening, and that it is useful in reviewing and evaluating the fine work that the employees of this court undertake on a daily basis.

Employees of the Probate/Juvenile Court

Judicial

David A. Hejmanowski, Judge
Kari Childs, Magistrate
Thomas C. Clark, II Magistrate
Robert Rice, Magistrate
Benjamin Suffron, II, Magistrate
Joe Varvel, Staff Attorney/Magistrate

Katie Stenman, Court Administrator

CASA

Tammy Matias, CASA Coordinator
Meagen Belcher, CASA Assistant
Coordinator
Melanie Kempton, CASA Assistant
Coordinator
Cheyenne Debren, CASA Assistant

Clerical Services

Renee Lovelien, Clerical Services
Department Head
Janet Ritter, Probate Office Manager
Debora Thomas, Judicial Services Manager
Nicole Cox, Juvenile Clerk
Rachel Dennison, Juvenile Clerk
Jill Jutte, Probate Clerk
Marilyn Kinniard, Juvenile Clerk
Melanie Layton, Records Clerk
Lisa Murphy, Probate Clerk
Danielle Orsburn, Juvenile Clerk
Brandi Pack, Probate Clerk
Lisa Patterson, Probate Clerk
Karen Peaks, Probate Clerk
Rene Ray, Receptionist
Leslee Shuster, Juvenile Clerk
Tammy Thompson, Juvenile Clerk

Fiscal

Karen Wadkins, Fiscal Coordinator
Angela Riley, Court Services
Analyst/Training Coordinator
Jessica Berry, Fiscal Specialist

Intake

Lisa Williamson, Director of Court Services
Stacy Blair, City School Liaison/Intake
Supervisor
Sara Miller, Assessment Center Supervisor
Kimberly Baker, Family Advocate
Melanie Bange, Mentoring Coordinator
Sydnee Buckley, Assessment Center
Specialist
Brittany Gates, Intake/Diversion Officer
Mersadie Grady, Intake/Diversion Officer
Vikki Hardwick, County School Attendance
Officer
Amy Marzich, School Liaison
Sharon Moran, Family Support Specialist
Megan Pentz, Intake/Diversion Officer
Ashley Stevens, Assessment Center
Specialist
Anna Travis, Safe Harbor Coordinator
Josh Williams, Family Advocate
Coordinator

Mediation

Kira Crawford, Mediator
Dodie Davenport, Mediation Coordinator

Probate

Teresa Tackett, Court Visitor Program
Manager/Probate Court Investigator
Donna Bukovec, Adoption Assessor

Probation and Treatment

Kara Moore, Chief Probation Officer
Gia DeGirolamo, Deputy Chief Probation
Officer
Josh Johnson, REI Coordinator/Probation
Officer
Michelle Leighty, Probation Officer
Lindsey Lenhart, Treatment Court
Coordinator/Probation Officer
Mitch Lockhart, Probation Assistant
Bobby Massie, Probation Officer
Ken Ward, Community Service/Restitution
Work Coordinator

Probate Court Statistics

Type of Filing	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Estates	487	546	542	602	653	663
Guardianship of Minors	44	35	27	24	20	36
Guardianship of Incompetents	57	70	64	63	70	94
Conservatorships	1	1	0	0	0	0
Testamentary Trusts	11	7	2	5	11	5
Civil Actions	15	15	14	24	28	18
Adoptions	52	41	34	44	46	45
Mental Commitment	1	2	3	1	5	3
Minor Settlement	19	8	14	15	14	27
Wrongful Death	15	12	7	13	14	23
Registration/Correction Birth Record	6	6	4	3	8	8
Change of Name	100	126	117	153	157	167
Marriage Applications Granted	856	781	871	876	989	900
Miscellaneous Filings ¹	92	99	116	135	98	116
	1756	1749	1815	1823	2113	2105

¹ Miscellaneous filings include: Disinterment, Wills for Deposit, Administrative Orders, and other filings not specifically reported to the Ohio Supreme Court.

Age of Adult Wards Under Guardianship 2023 <i>(as of 12.31.23)</i>	
Age Range	
18-30	274
31-50	140
51-70	94
71-89	63
90+	8
Total	579

Types of Adoptions Filed 2023	
Adult	10
Private	6
Private - Agency	7
Adoption Preplacement	1
Public Agency	5
Re-finalization	3
Step-parent	13
Total	45

2023 Marriage Licenses Issued Monthly	
January	45
February	39
March	56
April	63
May	105
June	94
July	76
August	114
September	127
October	80
November	55
December	46
TOTAL	900

<u>2023 New Estate Case Action*</u>	
*Does not include re-open actions in same case number	
TYPE OF ESTATE	Total
Ancillary Administration	12
Full Administration	102
Probate Will	287
Release From Administration	132
Real Estate Transfer	14
Special Administration	5
Short Form Release	3
Summary Release	42
Taxes	0
Wrongful Death	9
Will for Record Only	19
TOTAL	625

Types of Hearings Scheduled in 2023	Number of Hearings
Probate Adoption Consent	1
Probate Adult Adoption Hearing	11
Probate Private Agency Adoption	7
Probate Pre-Placement Adoption	1
Probate Private Placement Adoption	16
Probate Public Agency Adoption	4
Probate Foreign Adoption Re-finalization	2
Probate Step-Parent Adoption	23
Probate Appointment Of Co-Guardian	23
Probate Appointment Of Fiduciary	15
Probate Appointment Of Guardian	137
Probate Appointment of Trustee	1
Probate Case Review	38
Probate Disinterment	1
Probate Hearing	117
Probate Pre-Trial	7
Probate Trial	39
Probate Non-Oral Hearing	2
Probate Status Conference	32
Probate Insolvency	5
Probate Minor Claim	12
Probate Minor Claim & Dispense Guardianship	15
Probate Minor Claim W/Guardianship	12
Probate Minor Name Change	30
Probate Will Admission	1
Total	552

Results of Probate Scheduled Hearings in 2023*	Number of Hearings
Continued	93
Failure to appear	3
Dismissed	25
Informal / No Recording	0
Heard	381
Non-Oral Complete	8
Vacated	42
Total	552

* 975 Inventory and Accounts were filed and reviewed by non-oral hearing during 2023

Juvenile Court Statistics

Traffic Citations filed 2023 Juvenile Court

Traffic Citation	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Speed	401	312	326	238	237	219	246
Assured Clear Distance /Hit Skip	163	140	131	78	110	103	132
Operating Vehicle Under Influence	13	8	17	18	20	18	16
Failure to Control	48	55	60	56	54	73	47
No License/Permit, Suspended or Restrictions	48	47	61	56	39	31	27
Seat Restraint violations	38	28	31	13	24	15	14
Failure to Yield/Right of Way	103	70	92	55	66	70	75
Use of Wireless Electronic Device/Texting	1	4	4	1	0	0	3
Distracted Driving * New law 2019			15	14	5	8	2
Traffic Control Signal Violations	40	36	45	23	37	31	25
Improper Driving Actions*	86	49	52	43	51	43	67
Miscellaneous Actions	31	74	35	21	17	27	31
Total	972	823	869	616	660	638	685

*Encompasses various charges including lane violations, improper turns, and hit skips.

Unruly/Delinquency Charges

In 2023, 903 delinquent/unruly charges were filed. These 903 charges resulted in 392 formalized cases. These matters resulted in 121 adjudicated charges by 109 youth. Charges not adjudicated were handled by diversion, case dismissal, or may still be pending. In addition, there were 28 counts of either a violation of court order or violation of probation filed during the year.

Charges Filed and Adjudicated in 2023		
	Number of Charges Filed	Number of charges adjudicated*
Assault and Menacing		
Assault	64	6
Menacing	19	1
Sexual Offenses		
Rape / Sexual Battery	4	3
Pandering/illegal use - minor in nude material	26	7
Sexual Imposition	1	-
Disseminating Material Harmful to Juveniles	6	-
Voyeurism/Public Indecency	3	1
Kidnapping, Restraint, Extortion & Coercion		
Property related offenses		
Criminal Damaging	22	2
Criminal Mischief	8	1
Arson	1	-
Robbery, Burglary, Trespass, and Safecracking		
Robbery/Burglary	2	-
Criminal Trespassing	24	-
Possession of Criminal Tools	4	4
Theft and Fraud		
Theft	41	9
Misuse of Credit Cards	2	-
Identify Fraud/Falsification/ Forgery	5	1
Receiving Stolen Property	16	4
Unauthorized Use of a Vehicle	7	1
Offenses Against the Public Peace		
Disorderly Conduct	136	13
Harassment – Telephone/Other / Intimidation	3	-
Inducing Panic	2	-
Offenses Against the Family		
Domestic Violence	32	-
Offenses Against Justice and Public Administration		
Obstructing Justice	23	1
Extortion /Tampering with Evidence/False information	3	1
Resisting Arrest / failure to comply with police order	16	6
Conspiracy, Attempt and Complicity, Weapons Control, Corrupt Activity		
Weapons Control/Possession/Conceal	9	1
Complicity	1	-
Harassment with Bodily Substance	3	-
Offenses Drugs/Alcohol		

Possession of a Controlled Substance	17	2
Possession of Drugs / Drug Paraphernalia	28	3
Offenses Involving Underage Persons / Alcohol	62	6
Other Offenses		
Unruly Child	242	33
Prohibitions Relating to Tobacco	9	-
Habitual / Unruly Truant	49	3
Curfew	9	-
Other Offenses	1	-
Total	903	109

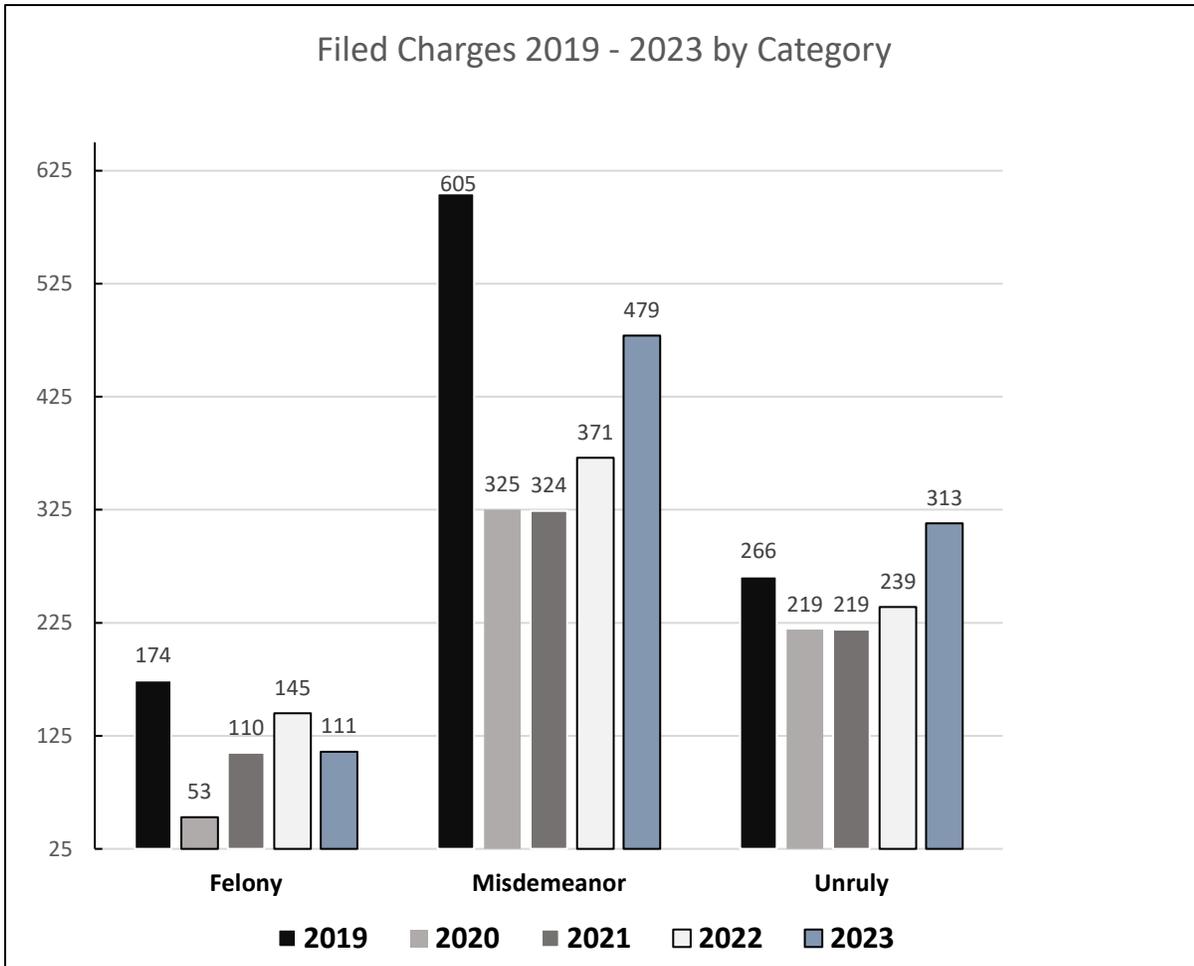
*52 cases from previous years adjudicated in 2023.

Charge totals by gender, age and zip code

City Name	Zipcode	Female	Male	Unk	TOTAL	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Total
HARRISBURG, PA	17111		1		1						1				1
ASHLEY	43003		3		3					1			1	1	3
CENTERBURG	43011		1		1								1		1
CROTON	43013	1			1								1		1
DELAWARE	43015	79	93	2	174	1	3	16	16	34	28	42	34		174
DUBLIN	43016	1			1				1						1
DUBLIN	43017	1			1						1				1
GALENA	43021	2	13		15				2	1	5	2	5		15
HEBRON	43025		1		1					1					1
LEWIS CENTER	43035	13	15		28				1	4	8	3	11	1	28
MARYSVILLE	43040		4		4						4				4
NEW ALBANY	43054	1	1		2		1					1			2
OSTRANDER	43061		1		1						1				1
POWELL	43065	6	15	1	22				1	2	7	5	6	1	22
RADNOR	43066		2		2							1		1	2
REYNOLDSBURG	43068	1	1		2								2		2
SUNBURY	43074	9	10		19	1	1	1	4	4	4	1	3		19
WESTERVILLE	43081	10	5		15		1			2	8	3	1		15
WESTERVILLE	43082	7	13		20		1	2	1	3	6	3	3	1	20
WORTHINGTON	43085		1		1						1				1
LANCASTER	43130	2			2						2				2
LITHOPOLIS	43136		2		2							1	1		2

COLUMBUS	43201		2	2					1			1		2	
COLUMBUS	43202	1	1	2								2		2	
COLUMBUS	43204		3	3							3			3	
COLUMBUS	43206		1	1							1			1	
COLUMBUS	43207		1	1				1						1	
COLUMBUS	43209	1		1			1							1	
COLUMBUS	43211		2	2				1		1				2	
COLUMBUS	43213	1	3	4			1	1		2				4	
COLUMBUS	43215		1	1					1					1	
COLUMBUS	43219	2		2			1	1						2	
COLUMBUS	43220		1	1						1				1	
COLUMBUS	43223		1	1								1		1	
COLUMBUS	43224	1		1				1						1	
COLUMBUS	43227		1	1					1					1	
COLUMBUS	43229	4	5	9			1		4	3	1			9	
GAHANNA	43230		3	3					2	1				3	
COLUMBUS	43231	1	3	4					2	2				4	
COLUMBUS	43232		1	1			1							1	
COLUMBUS	43235	2	3	5					3		2			5	
COLUMBUS	43240	5	6	11			2	1	4	2	2			11	
MARION	43302		3	3			2				1			3	
CARDINGTON	43315	1		1					1					1	
LAKEVIEW	43331		1	1							1			1	
MIDDLEBURG	43336	1		1		1								1	
MOUNT GILEAD	43338		1	1			1							1	
CUYAHOGA	44221		1	1				1						1	
AKRON	44310		1	1						1				1	
WARREN	44483	1		1								1		1	
HAMILTON	45011		1	1								1		1	
DAYTON	45415		1	1				1						1	
CINCINNATI	45048		1	1				1						1	
Richland County	45079		1	1					1					1	
CINCINNATI	45196		1	1					1					1	
CINCINNATI	45246		1	1							1			1	
CINCINNATI	45258		1	1					1					1	
HUNTSVILLE, TX	77320		1	1					1					1	
TOTAL		154	235	3	392	2	8	23	33	61	98	80	82	5	392

Total Charges Filed						
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Felony	174	53	110	145	111	593
Misdemeanor	605	325	324	371	479	2104
Unruly	266	219	219	239	313	1256
Total	1045	597	653	755	903	3953



ANNUAL STATISTICS AS REPORTED TO OHIO SUPREME COURT

2023

A B C D E F G H I J K T V

	Delinquency	Traffic	Dependency, Neglect or Abuse	Unruly	Adult Cases	Motion for Permanent Custody	Custody, Change of Custody, Visitation	Support Enforcement or Modification	Parentage	U.I.F.S.A.	All Others	Total	Visiting Judge
Pending beginning of period	56	16	4	18	7	9	6	1	0	0	0	117	0
New cases filed	234	651	41	76	55	0	7	1	0	0	28	1093	0
Cases transferred in, reactivated, or redesignated	193	53	0	81	18	4	10	2	0	0	0	361	0
Total cases	483	720	45	175	80	13	23	4	0	0	28	1571	0

TERMINATIONS BY:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	T	V
Trial by Judge	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
Trial by Magistrate	7	1	9	4	0	0	7	2	0	0	1	31	0
Dismissal by party, judge, or prosecutor	98	58	3	64	46	10	4	0	0	0	6	289	0
Admission to judge	18	419	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	440	0
Admission to magistrate	101	127	15	35	17	0	4	1	0	0	2	302	0
Certification/Waiver granted	0	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	0	0
Unavailability of party for trial	127	65	0	43	8	0	1	0	0	0	0	244	0
Transfer to another judge or court	60	13	0	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	88	0
Referral to private judge	X	X	X	X	X	X	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Interlocutory appeal or order	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other terminations	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	17	21	0
TOTAL Terminations	414	683	30	161	72	12	17	3	0	0	26	1418	0
Pending end of period	69	37	15	14	8	1	6	1	0	0	2	153	0

Clearance Rate	97%	97%	73%	103%	99%	300%	100%	100%	0%	0%	93%	98%	0%
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Time Guideline (months)	6	3	3	3	6	9	9	12	12	3	6	X	X
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Cases pending beyond time guideline	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
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Overage Rate	0%	0%	0%	14%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%
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Number of months oldest case overage	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	X	0
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Number of informal cases	158	0	0	1695	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1853	0
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Abused, Dependent, or Neglected Children

Abused Neglect Dependent Charges Filed 2023			
Description of Individual Charges	Charges filed	Adjudicated	Pending
Abused Child - Exhibits Injury	2	1	0
Abused Child - No Conviction Required	1	1	0
Abused Child - Victim Sexual Activity	2	0	1
Abused Child- Acts Causing Injury	25	1	6
Neglected Child - Injury by Omission	34	4	11
Neglected Child - Lack Parental Care	34	4	8
Neglected Child - Special care	12	0	6
Neglected Child -Abandoned	0	0	0
Neglected Child-Parental Refusal	20	3	6
Dependent Child - Residential Status Act	7	0	4
Dependent Child - Residential Status Danger	7	0	5
Dependent Child- Environmental Condition	39	22	11
Dependent Child- Homeless	7	2	0
Dependent Child- Parental condition	29	6	9
TOTAL	219	44	67

Miscellaneous	Case total
Transferred in from another county. Post disposition	0

Motion for Permanent Custody	
Filed in 2023	3
Carryover 2022	9
Granted 2023	2
Dismissed/denied 2023	9
Carryover into 2024	1

Hearings

Type of Scheduled Hearings – Juvenile 2023	TOTAL
Bridges – Initial Hearing	1
Bridges- Annual Review	1
Case Review	452
Change of Plea	25
Child Support Hearing	1
Civil Protection Order	22
Competency Hearing	56
Compliance Review	139
Contempt Hearing	5
Detention Hearing	103
Detention Review	78
Dispositional Hearing	316
Evidentiary Hearing	27
Family Treatment Court	16
Formal Arraignment Hearing	541
Hearing	79
In Camera Hearing	21
Jury Trial	2
Motion Hearing	110
Non-oral Hearing	78
Permanent Custody Hearing	51
Pretrial	877
Probable Cause Hearing	45
Restitution Hearing	6
Sealing/Expungement Hearing	42
Show Cause	11
Specialized Case Review	40
Specialized Classification Hearing	1
Status Hearing	125
Suppression Hearing	2
Traffic Formal Arraignment	711
Treatment Court	40
Trial	272
Violation of Court Order/Probation	81
GRAND TOTAL	4377

2023 Hearing Results	Total
Continued	526
Denial – new date set	114
Dismissed without hearing	38
Failure to appear	244
Heard	2674
Hearing type converted	61
Informal	309
Non-oral complete	49
Vacated	362
Grand Total	4377

Juvenile Court Processes in 2023

- 524 summons issued in 432 cases
- 40 warrants created/issued & 36 outstanding warrants executed or recalled
- 536 appointments of a public defender
- A Guardian ad Litem was appointed in 189 juvenile cases
- No jury trials were held in 2023
- Approximately 172 written record requests were provided to government, law enforcement, military, or probation services

Clerical Services

The Clerical Services Department assigns staff in both the Probate and Juvenile Courts. Each department operates independent of the other and follows local rules created for each Court. Clerical staff process filings from the beginning to the end of each case and are essential to the Court. One of the core functions of the Clerical Services Department is to maintain accurate and complete records of all court proceedings. The Clerical Services Department receives case filings and documents in-person, by facsimile, by mail, and by E-filing through a client registered system. Cross training between Probate and Juvenile clerical staff continues to be on-going, with the goal of providing uninterrupted service to both courts

Our clerical staff believe that it is important to continually look for ways to improve our service to the court and the public we serve. We also reinforce the need to keep up with the latest changes to the law and its effect on the Courts with training opportunities. Participation in Court-wide and departmental team meetings reinforce the importance of education for all staff. Attendance at a yearly conference for deputy clerks provides networking and information on the latest practices of other Ohio Probate and Juvenile Courts. The staff also have opportunities throughout the year to attend events developed by the Court's training coordinator and also are encouraged to attend Supreme Court trainings onsite or via their desktop computers.

One Department Head oversees both Probate and Juvenile Clerical Services staff. Probate Court clerical staff for 2023 included an Office Manager and five Deputy Clerks. Each clerk is assigned a Probate case type for efficient processing.. Juvenile Court clerical staff for 2023 included 9 Deputy Clerks. Areas of assignment include: traffic court, records, courtroom services, treatment court, probation, jury services, docketing and processing, assignment commissioners, and client services.

In 2023, Juvenile clerical staff inputted 32,817 docket entries in 14,499 cases and Probate clerical staff inputted 41,903 docket entries in 8,932 cases. Clerical staff also handled 7,486 inbound calls in Probate and 1,733 inbound calls in Juvenile, as well as 2,220 to the main number. Clerical staff also prepared the following documents for service:

Documents Service Types		
2023	Probate	Juvenile
Certified Mail	353	448
Sheriff Service	0	355
Subpoena	25	700
Personal	0	42
Electronic Service	2500	8395
Publication	27	9

The Court's Records Office audits, reviews, and processes the Court's filed documents for preservation.

Scanned documents save time and increase efficiencies, by allowing the image to be electronically accessed versus the previous requirement of physically locating each case file and the required document. The Probate and Juvenile Clerks Office scanned 152,238 page images during 2023 and 161 boxes were sent to the County Records Center for historic preservation on microfilm.

The Probate/Juvenile Court follows the Supreme Court of Ohio's guidelines for language interpreters by using in-person certified interpreters for the majority of the Court's matters. In 2023, the Court set 45 interpretation events for a cost \$8,855. Of those, 82% of requests for an interpreter were for the Spanish language; others included Uzbek, ASL, Nepali, and Somali. The Court also uses telephonic interpreters when in-person interpreter services are not available. In 2023, the service was used 5 times for a total of 89 minutes.

The Court's website is actively utilized by the public. In 2023, Probate Court website pages were viewed 183,522 times, with the records search, guardianship and estate pages viewed the most. The Juvenile Court website was visited 25,877 times with record search, local rules and hearing information receiving the most traffic. The e-services portal was accessed to perform 12,026 e-filings, 881 e-marriage license applications and 563 juvenile e-payments.

Court Visitor Program

During the course of 2023, a total of 160 visits were conducted. Sixty-four of the wards were age 55 or above and 87 of the guardians were age 55 or above. There were 371.50 direct service hours provided to the 55 or older ward and/or guardian population.

Intake Department

Diversion

Diversion is an opportunity offered to a juvenile offender charged with a status or misdemeanor offense.. Diversion is a voluntary program in which a case is sealed and dismissed upon successful completion of the program. The Diversion Program has been enhanced with a strong evidenced-based approach to better assess youth and to not unnecessarily keep them involved with the Court. In 2023, the Court conducted 160 diversion conferences.

Diversion is designed for low risk and generally first-time offenders. The goal is to hold youth accountable without adjudication, which could be detrimental to their future. It is our practice for low risk offenders to have minimal contact, thus a youth in Diversion would receive no more than 2 hours of direct service contact with the Diversion Officer. Research shows that the more contact the Court has with a youth, the more their criminogenic risk increases.

At times, the Court will allow youth who are second time offenders 6the opportunity to participate in diversion for some second time offenders. This is done on a case to case basis considering but not limited to the following criteria: the age of the youth when first Diversion occurred and the age of the second Diversion, the time in between charges; the nature of the second charge and it relates to the first time charge (ex: first charge being an Unruly at an early age, and

second charge occurring at age 17). Home and school behaviors, along with work history in the community are also taken into account to determine youth's likelihood of further recidivism.

The Court continues the practice of Group Diversion conferences for alleged juvenile co-defendants. It allows for increased responsibility for each youth involved in an offense and reduces blame on others by youth or parents.

Typically, a Diversion Conference will occur at the court. However, at times those conferences may occur at the school if the behavior of concern is occurring at the school, or if the court and/or family request the support of the school. Diversions may also be conducted by the Assessment Center staff. This typically occurs for unruly offenses occurring at home. This allows for the family to be linked to other needed services that are available from community partners.

New in 2023, the Court did allow a select group of felony charges to be processed through diversion. If a youth is charged with disseminating matter harmful to juveniles, a felony of the fifth degree, they case may be sent to diversion. This only occurs if the matter disseminated stayed between two consenting youth. If the harmful matter is disseminated to other parties, the case will be formalized.

Intake

The Intake Department is the first contact in the system for a youth and family. The Department screens all complaints to determine the course of action that will be taken. The case may be referred to the Assessment Center, Diversion, or formal court. These decisions are made in accordance with Ohio Juvenile Rule 9. Once a decision is made about the direction of the case, it will be assigned to an Assessment Center, Diversion, or Intake staff member and the staff member will follow the procedures outlined for each program.

Intervention in Lieu (Hold Open)

In 2023, the Intake team served 108 youth who qualified for the Intervention in Lieu (Hold Open) program. The purpose of this program is to work with youth, through the use of motivational interviewing, to build skills that will support the juvenile in making better choices and strive to keep the juvenile from incurring additional charges. These youth served in the Intervention in Lieu program are not adjudicated. They are given up to six months to complete terms and conditions. If they successfully complete the terms and conditions, their case(s) is/are dismissed and sealed. This gives the youth an opportunity to be held accountable, and not have an official court record.

To qualify for this program, the juvenile shall be charged with a status, misdemeanor, or felony out of a single incident. The youth must have no prior adjudications, and no prior court involvement for a period of one year. Once the juvenile has entered an admission to an offense, the Intake Officer will meet with the youth to conduct assessments/screening tools. These tools may include: the Ohio Youth Assessment System (OYAS) Disposition Screening Tool, the GAIN-SS (Global Appraisal of Individual Needs- Short Screener), PEARLS (Pediatric ACEs and Related Life Events Screener). The youth must score a low risk on the OYAS Dispositional Screening Tool to qualify for Intervention in Lieu. Once the assessments are completed, the Intake Officer will present the court with summaries of the assessments and dispositional recommendations. After disposition, the Intake Officer will meet face to face with the juvenile for a minimum of 1 hour for the duration of the case. During those meetings the Intake Officer will work with the juvenile utilizing motivational interviewing to help reach the program goals.

General Intake

The Intake Officers also served 79 youth who qualified for the General Intake program. The purpose of this program is to work with youth to build skills that will support the juvenile in making better choices and will help the juvenile avoid incurring new charges and further penetration into the juvenile justice system. To qualify for the General Intake program, the juvenile can have a status, misdemeanor, or felony charge. Once the juvenile has entered an admission to an offense, the Intake Officer will meet with the youth to conduct assessments/screening tools. These tools may include: the Ohio Youth Assessment System (OYAS) Disposition Screening Tool, the GAIN-SS (Global Appraisal of Individual Needs- Short Screener), PEARLS (Pediatric ACEs and Related Life Events Screener). The youth must be a low risk on the OYAS Dispositional Screening Tool. Once the assessments are completed, the Intake Officer will present the court with a summary and recommendations. Once the assessments are completed, the Intake Officer will present the court with summaries of the assessments and dispositional recommendations. These juveniles are given up to six months to complete terms and conditions. After disposition, the Intake Officer will meet face to face with the juvenile for a total of a minimum of 1 hour over for the duration of the case. During those meetings, the Intake Officer will work with the juvenile utilizing motivational interviewing to help reach the program goals. During the time of supervision, the Intake Officer will reference the Incentive and Sanction Matrix and will document all informal interventions utilized with the juvenile to deter from placement in detention.

Truancy

The Court has a dedicated docket to manage the caseload regarding truant and unruly behavior at local schools throughout Delaware County. The purpose and goal of the dedicated docket is to centralize the hearing schedules of the City and County School Liaisons, as well as to ensure quick resolutions to cases. The dedicated docket hears cases regarding truancy, unruly activity at school, failure to send children to school as well as adult contributing charges. Cases can only be formalized once alternative efforts are attempted to divert the cases from the Court. In that effort, the School Liaisons meet with the children at issue and attempt to address barriers to attendance. If that is unsuccessful in curbing the truant/unruly behavior, a mediation is scheduled with the Court's Mediator. During the mediation, a Student Attendance Intervention Plan (SAIP) is created in effort to prevent charges from being filed. Parents and students are provided a copy of the mediation agreement/SAIP immediately following mediation. If there is not an improvement in attendance over the next sixty days, the school can choose to file a charge on the child and/or the parent, depending on the issues at hand in each case. Every effort is made to prevent charges from being filed. It is the collaboration with the school staff, court staff, and the student's family that helps to encourage and improve school attendance.

School Liaisons

There were thirty-six (36) truancy charges and fifty-two (52) adult contributing charges filed during the 2023/2024 school year for all districts that we serve. This includes Delaware City, Olentangy, Big Walnut, Buckeye Valley, Delaware Area Career Center, GOAL Digital Academy, and Dublin Jerome. All thirty-six (36) truancy cases were offered diversion. Of the thirty-six (36) truancy cases, twenty-three (23) cases were successfully diverted, thirteen (13) cases are still pending with the court, and zero (0) cases were adjudicated due to non-compliance when diverted.

	DCS	Olentangy	Big Walnut	Buckeye Valley	DACC	GDA & Dublin Jerome	Total
Informal Meeting	336	758	178	187	71	0	1530
Mediations	275	202	39	43	15	5	579
Adult Contributing	24	16	5	4	0	4	53
Truancy Charge	11	13	3	4	0	5	36
Diversion Offered	11	13	3	4	0	5	36
Successful	4	10	3	4	0	2	23
Adjudicated*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pending	7	3	0	0	0	3	13

*While there were zero (0) truancy cases adjudicated out of the 2023/2024 school truancy filings, there were three (3) cases adjudicated from truancy cases filed during the 2022/2023 school year. These cases were adjudicated in July 2023, Nov. 2023, and Feb. 2024 due to non-compliance with court terms and/or school attendance.

Victim Services

The Victim Services Program was established for the Juvenile Court in 1987 to provide information and support for victims of juvenile crime and to ensure that case-related decisions include greater consideration for the victim. In April of 2023, Marcy’s Law was amended to expand the protection of victim’s rights throughout the court process. This program is committed to assisting victims following all Disposition hearings with notification of any case reviews, termination hearings, and helping to recover any financial losses. Keeping sight of a “balanced approach” ensures that offenders are held accountable to their victims, and that victims regain some degree of wholeness after an offense has been committed against them.

The COVID-19 pandemic provided an alternative way for victims to attend court hearings remotely, using Zoom for any victim that is unable to attend in person. The ability to attend a hearing remotely continues to increase the percentage of participation of victims in juvenile cases. During Fiscal Year 2023, the Victim Services Program provided services to 220 victims of juvenile crime. The Victim Services Program also assists victims in applying for compensation through the Ohio Victim of Crime Compensation Program. This program is available to victims of violent crime in which physical or emotional harm to the victim results in a financial loss.

The Victim Services Program is part of the Delaware County Coalition of Victim Services, which is involved with raising community awareness of victim-related crimes in Delaware County. Each spring the Coalition organizes “Walk a Mile in her Shoes” to support awareness of sexual

abuse. The Program also actively promotes National Crime Victim's Right Week in April and Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October.

Victim Awareness Program

Created in 2008, the Victim Awareness Program helps juvenile offenders understand how their actions affected their victims. Through a series of classes, these juveniles must analyze their actions and participate in exercises geared towards helping them more fully understand the consequences of those actions. The goal of the program is to keep the juveniles from re-offending by helping them understand the impact that their actions will have on others and themselves. The program emphasizes the process of making good choices by giving juveniles tools that can help them be more successful in their daily lives. In 2023, the program conducted 6 sessions of 5 classes each. Of the 27 juveniles who successfully completed the program, only 3 have committed a subsequent offense. Overall since its inception, the recidivism rate for juveniles who have successfully completed the Victim Awareness Program is 11.1%.

Restitution Tracking and Compliance Program

In January of 2016, the Victim Services Program initiated a new program to better serve the victims of juvenile crime who have incurred financial loss due to a juvenile's offense. The purpose of the Restitution Tracking and Compliance Program is to provide oversight of victim restitution from initial contact with the victim through the final collection process. The goal of this program is to improve compliance of the payment of restitution by juvenile offenders so that the victim realizes financial reimbursement for their loss in a timely manner.

In 2018, a Restitution Docket was established. This docket holds juveniles accountable for making regular payments toward the restitution owed by requiring them to attend a monthly hearing if a monthly payment is not made according to terms agreed upon by the juvenile at the time of disposition. In Fiscal Year 2023, the Court distributed \$8,365.51 in restitution to victims of juvenile crime.

Mentoring Programs

Together Everyone Achieves More (T.E.A.M.), and Mothers Offering Mentoring Support (M.O.M.S.) are modeled similarly; both programs are one-to-one mentoring programs that meet consistently. Community Mentors are each screened through two interview processes, complete the County's vetting/disclosure process, and complete training. Mentees and families/guardians meet with the Mentoring Programs to complete assessments and applications. Once Mentors and Mentees are matched, the Coordinator monitors each match. Funding for both programs continues to be through the Court's general fund; however, M.O.M.S. has received another support grant from the Delaware County Bar Association to use in 2024.

Mentees are students in grades 4-12 who are determined to be "at risk" for court system involvement or need additional social-emotional support. Mentors teach reasoning skills, provide innovative ways of thinking about life needs, and provide various free/low cost ideas that students can do. T.E.A.M. matches use a hybrid approach from the tools in Brene Brown's Daring

Classrooms and the After School Activities portion of the Too Good for Drugs curricula. Goal setting processes are inspired by the 40 Developmental Assets from The Search Institute. T.E.A.M. receives Mentee referrals from within the Juvenile Court (especially the Assessment Center), Job and Family Services (especially Family Children's First Council), Delaware Area Career Center Career Based Initiative (CBI) classes, and directly from school systems. As of December 2023, there were 14 youth enrolled; 7 students in grades 4-7, 6 students in grades 8-12, 7 Mentees currently waiting to be matched, and 3 Mentees currently in the assessments process. Throughout 2023, Mentoring Programs received referrals for, screened, withdrew, or found better fitting services for 62 adolescents and families.

The M.O.M.S. program pairs pregnant/new mothers with experienced Mothers as Mentors. The Mentees in M.O.M.S. are determined to need support with social support and parenting practices. Mentors assist new/expectant families with next phases of parenting, "typical" child development, scheduling/maintaining appointments, family self-care, and independent living skills. M.O.M.S. utilizes workbooks with InJoy Health Education for pregnancy. The Mentees for M.O.M.S. receive referrals from the school system alternative schooling programs, Job and Family Services, and Juvenile Court (especially the Assessment Center). As of December 2023, Mentoring Programs matched 5 Moms with Mentors, are in the process of assessing 2 families, and acted as a short-term Mentoring Program, withdrew, or found better fitting services for 9 families.

Highlights for M.O.M.S. programming continues to be independent living focused. While meeting with families, Mentors and Programs have heard Mentees express significant barriers with housing, transportation, and motivated case management. Mentors have worked to link Mentees with appropriate resources for case management and often times link the barrier of transportation with an individual session; such as shopping at Costco, utilizing SNAP money to budget, and create as many family friendly frozen meals as possible. Matches have enjoyed working on child development activities, including attending the Lolli-pops! Children's Concert series in Powell and holiday tree lightings in Delaware. Mentees also appreciated receiving holiday gifts from The United Way of Delaware County; all gifts were self-care focused for Mentees and play or basic needs focused for children.

Mentoring Programs have continued to facilitate connection opportunities for Mentors quarterly; this is typically completed within the community in a space that matches can access during their individual time. M.O.M.S. volunteers have met at the Delaware Preservation Parks (Gallant Farm location) and Delaware County District Public Library (Liberty Branch). T.E.A.M. volunteers have met at Ohio Wesleyan University (Branch Rickey Fieldhouse) and the park at Unity Community Center.

Assessment Center:

A preventive and diversionary program of the Juvenile Court, the Assessment Center provides a place for youth and families to obtain needed services in order to reduce the risk of entering the juvenile system. In partnership with Delaware City Schools and United Way Strengthening Families Initiative, the Assessment Center is housed away from the courthouse to

further divert youth from the court system. Beginning to provide services on November 1, 2019, the Assessment Center opened in the Willis Education Building located in Delaware City.

It is the goal of the Assessment Center to assess youth and families' needs and be able to bridge any gaps in getting services in place for youth and families. The Assessment Center collaborates with agencies, parents, schools and law enforcement to provide help for families that are struggling with youth's behaviors by providing support and linkage to the right services. The Assessment Center brings a strength-based, collaborative approach in selecting a plan of how to provide support to youth and families.

The Assessment Center has partnered with community agencies such as Delaware City Schools, United Way, Syntero, Delaware Job and Family Services, Family and Children First Council, and Delaware-Morrow County Mental Health and Recovery Board. With these partnerships, we have been able to link services quickly and more conveniently for families. We have been able to utilize the programs these partners have in order to help our youth and families.

Due to the amount of referrals we received last year, we were able to expand our staff and now have total of 3 staff at the Assessment Center.

In 2023, the Assessment Center had a total of 205 referrals and served 154 youth and families. These families received services from T.E.A.M Mentoring Program, Parent Project, Syntero, Girls Group, Family Advocate Program, Family and Children First Council, Family Resource Center, food pantries, United Way's programs, Department of Job and Family Services, Andrew's House Legal Clinic, mental health/drug and alcohol providers, after-school programming and DATA/Flex transportation services. These youth and families were assessed, linked to appropriate services, and/or given parenting support; all in hopes to reduce the issues in the home/school or community, ultimately lowering the need to become involved in the juvenile justice system.

Parent Project/Loving Solutions:

Parent Project is a nationally facilitated program that was made by parents, for parents of strong-willed and destructive teens ages 12-17 years old. The program is designed to help empower parents to be able to more effectively manage their teens in the home and build a better parent-child relationship. The program is also designed to provide a parent support group for parents that are trying to make changes in their home and need support to sustain their efforts. The program is a total of 24 class hours and runs for 12 weeks.

We currently have 5 facilitators and are looking to collaborate with others to become facilitators so the program can be offered more frequently to parents. We are running two classes a year, one in the winter and one in the summer or fall.

In 2023, we were able to serve 22 parents with virtual and an in-person classes.

This year we were able to facilitate our first Loving Solutions class. Loving Solutions is the sister program of the Parent Project for parents of children 5-10 years old who are struggling with parenting. We hope to continue to offer this program at least one time per year.

In 2023, we were able to serve 6 parents/guardians during this virtual session.

The CASA Program of Delaware and Union Counties

In 2023, The CASA Program of Delaware and Union Counties continued to experience growth and expansion. The program added 15 new CASA/GAL volunteers who were trained and sworn in. These new volunteers immediately began advocating for abused and neglected children in both counties.

Volunteer/Case Statistics:

Volunteer CASA Advocates	65	
Volunteer Total Case Hours	7,013	
Miles Driven by Volunteers for Casework	65,076	
Number of Children Served	214	
Of Children served: Female	101	
Male	113	
Child Age Range	0-5	90
	6-11	57
	12-15	43
	16-17	17
	18+	7

CASA/GAL Case Outcomes 2023: Abuse, Neglect, Dependent Docket

In 2023, 80 children’s cases were closed with a CASA/GAL Volunteer involved. Of those 80 children, following are some important outcomes:

Reunification Achieved	25
Adopted	8
Legal Custody (relative)	27
Child turned 18/21	3
Other(case transferred, removed from docket etc. legal custody to non-relative, remained in home)	17

CASA/GAL Volunteers continue to be a strong voice in the courtroom for abused and neglected children. While the National CASA volunteer retention rate is 18 months, the CASA Program of Delaware and Union Counties had a retention rate of 30.3 months in 2023. The CASA/GAL Volunteers in Delaware and Union Counties are very dedicated and committed to ensuring that every child has a voice in the courtroom and achieves a safe and permanent home at case closure.

Mediation

The Mediation Department is currently staffed with two full time mediators who offer mediation services to all Delaware County Probate/Juvenile Court programs. The Department was referred 577 cases for the 2023 calendar year, up just slightly from 541 in 2022. Consistently, Truancy mediations have made up the bulk of our mediation numbers for 2023. Numbers were slightly up from 495 referrals in 2022 to 522 in 2023. Our goal is to continue to accommodate each school district and their families. The Delaware City school district have continued to utilize zoom to conduct their mediations, while the Delaware County school districts have opted for in-person mediation at the school. This encompasses a total of 52 school buildings, including: high schools, middle schools, elementary schools and various alternative schools.

In 2023, the Delaware County Department of Jobs and Family Services referred 31 (formal/informal) Abuse/Neglect cases to mediation, up from 27 in 2022. We did see a few more custody mediation referrals in 2023 from 6 in 2022 to 9 referrals in 2023. We expect the number of referrals to continue to increase.

Juvenile offender mediations increased to 7 in 2023, from 4 in 2022. School mediations involving behavior/peer issues have been on the rise, 3 were mediated in the first 4 months of the 2023-2024 school year.

We anticipate continued growth for the Mediation Department in 2024, as Delaware County continues to grow at a rapid rate. At this time, the department has adequate staff to continue to provide mediation services for all Delaware County Probate/Juvenile Court programs and departments such as: attendance, juvenile offenders, child protection, custody, Probate, Assessment Center and peer mediations.

2023 Mediation Statistics

Type of Mediation	Referred	Mediated	Outcomes**	Hours*
Attendance	522	483	483F/27N/12OT	966
Delinquency	7	2	2F/ 5N	4
Child Protection	31	20	2F/12P/6N//11OT	80
Parenting/Custody	9	6	1F/5P/2N/1OT	24
Informal Peer school/request	3	3	3F	
Assessment Center	5	3	2F/1P/2OT	6
Probate	0	0	N/O	0
TOTALS	577	517	493F/18P/40N/26OTH	1080

**Hours are actual hours in mediation and does not include all the pre- and post-mediation work, including but not limited to scheduling, preparing paperwork, and communication with parties and counsel.

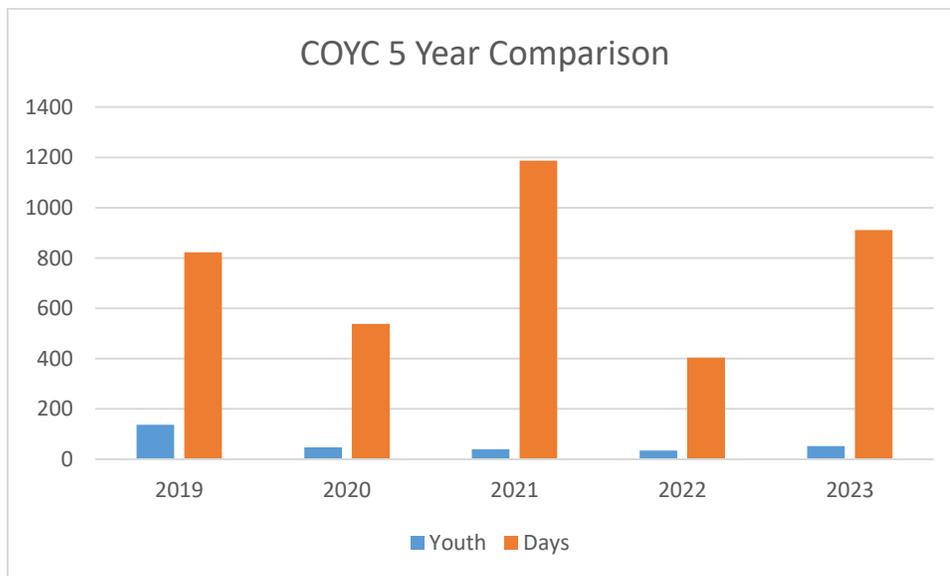
***Outcomes are full (SAIP signed), no mediation, including no show, or other (student moved out of the district, for example).

Probation

The Probation department is charged with supervising youth who have been recognized as being moderate to high risk by validated assessment tools. Probation officers use evidence-based practices such as EPICS, the Carey Guides, and Motivational Interviewing techniques to change behavior and reduce recidivism. The department is involved in three specialized dockets: Juvenile Treatment Court, Adult Treatment Court and the Juvenile Sex Offender docket. Within the Probation department are the Suspension Alternative/Community Service Program and the Court's Race, Equity, Inclusion Coordinator.

During the 2023 calendar year, 45 youth were served in the probation program. Of those, 19 were non-minority male, 13 were non-minority female, 9 were minority male, and 4 were minority female. There were 15 successful terminations made up of 7 non-minority males, 2 non-minority females, 4 minority males and 2 minority females. There were 2 unsuccessful terminations made up of 1 non-minority male and 1 minority male. There were 4 neutral terminations made up of 2 non-minority males and two minority males.

There were 52 youths held for a total of 911 days in detention. One youth was placed in a Community Correctional Facility. Alternatives to detention include house arrest monitoring, increased reporting, attending groups, and heavily incentivizing good behavior.



The Suspension Alternative Program/Community Service

The Juvenile Court also runs a Suspension Alternative Program (SAP), which provides daily activities for youth suspended from school. SAP is six hours a day and consists of community

service projects for non-profit agencies and government entities. In 2023, 129 youth participated in SAP working 6 hours a day for a total of 774 hours of supervised service. SAP is funded through the Juvenile Court, schools, and a grant from Source Point. In addition to SAP, the Juvenile Court also runs a Community Service Program that allows the youth to work through the Court to meet their community service requirements and earn money to pay their owed restitution. In 2023, 95 youth worked through the community service program on various projects.

Through a partnership with Source Point, the Court served 50 elderly residents of Delaware County in 2023. The service requests, also known as referrals, are collected by Source Point and forwarded to the Juvenile Court for the Community Service or SAP crew to complete and are supervised by a Court employee. These referrals included shoveling snow, planting plants/bulbs, weeding, mulching, raking leaves, cleaning out garages, picking up sticks, leveling yards, trimming bushes, removing and setting up patio furniture, picking up walnuts and sweet gums. In 2023, the total service hours completed by the crews were 380, with a bulk of the referrals being completed within seven business days. All this was completed while maintaining a Covid-19 safety protocol, keeping our community safe.

In 2023, the SAP and Community Service programs also served the Delaware County Health Department by picking up 60 bags of litter and disposing of 54 large/very large items. The programs also delivered 4800 issues of The Communicator, Source Point's bimonthly newspaper. In 2021, the programs were also recognized by the Delaware County Health Department for their outstanding efforts to keep Delaware County Litter free.

Race, Equity, and Inclusion (REI) Work

In 2023, the Court continued its work in the REI space. The Court continued to expound upon the partnerships with community agencies, relevant data collection, engaging youth and families, and leading critical conversations with staff to address race, equity and inclusion. In doing so, in September of 2023 the Probate/Juvenile Court partnered with Dr. Joanne Lunceford, the acting Director of the Columbus City Mayor's Office of Violence Prevention to engage court staff in a professional development opportunity with a focus on race equity. This training created space for staff to further their own goals of equity and inclusion, as well as the Probate/Juvenile Court as a whole. As we move into 2024, the court intends to seek out opportunities to identify new community partners to further the professional development of staff. Josh Johnson, REI Coordinator, is confident the Court can continue to build upon prior work continuing the progress of creating an inclusive, equitable and accessible court for the community that it serves.

Court Therapy Dog Program

Franklin, the court therapy dog, is now four years old! He is in his maintenance phase of training, which will continue throughout his career. Franklin has earned several certifications through the American Kennel Club, including the puppy S.T.A.R., Canine Good Citizen, Canine Good Citizen Urban and Advanced, Trick Dog Novice and Intermediate level. Moreover, he has earned certifications as a therapy dog through No Bad Dogs Ohio and Nationally through Love on Leash and The American Kennel Club.

Franklin has been a great asset to the Juvenile/Probate Court and the Delaware County community. In 2023, he responded to requests for his services from more than ten county

agencies. He has spent hours with individuals as they attend various court proceedings, including accompanying victimized children during their testimony, assisting in trial preparation, and supporting mental health clinicians in de-escalating youth who have difficulty regulating their emotions.

Additionally, Franklin has spent time with many children who have experienced trauma. This includes children who have experienced abuse and neglect, while they speak with Judge Hejmanowski during In-Camera Hearings. He has been there for victims of crime, people experiencing trauma, and youth involved in the juvenile justice system. He continues responding to critical incidents, has been a shoulder to cry on, and puts a smile on countless faces throughout the year.

Franklin and his handler, Deputy Chief Gia DeGirolamo, love visiting the schools, partnering with county agencies, and participating in community activities. His companionship continues to positively impact children and adults alike.

Treatment Court

Juvenile Treatment Court

Under the leadership of Judge Hejmanowski, Delaware County Juvenile/Probate Court operates two Specialized Dockets. The Juvenile Treatment Court docket is a separate and Specialized Docket within the Delaware County Juvenile Court. This docket assists in rehabilitating juvenile, non-violent offenders adjudicated delinquent regarding an offense where substance use or co-occurring disorders are the underlying cause. The Juvenile Treatment Court provides an environment where youth can develop prosocial attitudes and beliefs essential to eliminating substance use and reducing recidivism. Specifically, the program offers a collaborative approach to include the magistrate, probation department, treatment court coordinator, mental health providers, defense attorneys, Guardians ad Litem, the youth, and their families. Juvenile Treatment Court uses appropriate incentives, therapeutic interventions, sanctions, case management, random drug testing, evidence-based behavior change practices, and community supervision.

Juvenile Treatment Court is an entirely voluntary program that will assist the youth in developing the skills needed to address their mental health and substance use disorders adequately. The Juvenile Treatment Court serves a targeted population of youth aged 14-17. These youth will have completed an Alcohol and Drug assessment with a substance abuse or dependency disorder diagnosis. These youth will be on Community Control through the Probation Department and shall be assessed by the Ohio Youth Assessment System (OYAS) with a moderate or high risk of re-offending. Many of these youth are high-needs and at risk for possible placement outside the home. Many participants have experienced varying degrees of adverse childhood experiences.

The Juvenile Treatment Court participants will graduate after completing four phases. Each phase will support the youth by providing the framework for them to live a sober lifestyle. Each phase is intended to provide education and support that will last beyond the youth's court involvement. In 2023, the Juvenile Treatment Court served one youth who did successfully graduate from the program.

Family Dependency Treatment Court

Family Dependency Treatment Court, under Judge Hejmanowski, is a separate, Specialized Docket designed for parents involved with the Delaware County Department of Job and Family Services (DCDJFS). Their involvement is due to parental misuse of drugs, alcohol, or inadequately treated/untreated mental health concerns. On December 16, 2022, the Family Dependency Treatment Court earned the Specialized Docket Recertification through the Ohio Supreme Court Commission on Specialized Dockets. Specialized Dockets, such as Family Dependency Treatment Court, are a collaborative and cost-effective way to reunite children with their parents, often in less time. Family Dependency Treatment Court is a voluntary program intended to help improve the lives of the parents and children we serve. Participants update the Court during regularly held hearings, attend treatment appointments with community-based providers, and must have completed their agreed-upon case plan with DCDJFS.

While on the Family Treatment Court docket, the participant will participate in frequent and random drug screening. The Treatment Court Coordinator partners with many community-based providers to assist the participants in finding additional support when needed. These supports include linking clients to services such as employment, education, housing, parenting, family dynamics, tutoring, mentoring, and prosocial community-based partners. In each case, a Court Appointed Family Advocate/Guardian ad Litem (CASA/GAL) assists the team. This docket helps participants in matriculating to graduating the Family Treatment Court once they have obtained the skills to manage their mental health, live a drug-free lifestyle, and continue as law-abiding citizens without needing supervision from the Court.

In 2023, the Family Treatment Court had five adults referred to the docket. Of those referred, three people declined participation. Two people participated in the Family Treatment Court Program, and one graduated in 2023. It remains true that opioids, cocaine, and methamphetamines are the substances we see abused the most in Delaware County Family Treatment Court. However, the Court remains committed to holding those before the Court accountable, assisting families needing services, and working in children's best interests.

Family Advocate Programs

The Family Advocate program began at the Court in 1983. Family Advocate programming is community based and utilizes family-directed interventions designed to deal with at-risk, multi-need youth and their families. These services are aided by the direct observation of clients and families in their natural environment. Observation reveals interpersonal dynamics, strengths, and potential growth areas that help guide goal formation and collaboration. Program staff provide family systems-oriented services grounded in the concepts of Functional Family Therapy (FFT). FFT is designed to broaden families' abilities to conceptualize problems, reduce blame and develop shared ownership in resolving problems. FFT is also used to teach necessary skills for families to improve functioning; and reduce recidivism and out-of-home placements.

In addition to assessments completed by court personnel prior to referral (e.g. OYAS, GAIN-SS etc.), the advocate programs utilizes either the Family Environmental Scale (FES) or Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale (FACES IV) to measure the environmental and social characteristics of the families. These tools aid goal formation as they help identify growth opportunities in areas such as family cohesion, communication, and family satisfaction. Staff attempt to gather assessment data in the engagement phase and again at termination to aid in

measuring the family’s self-reported progress. Advocates aim for weekly family contact (multiple times/week depending on the FFT stage and client needs) to establish goals and then provide ongoing service. Length of stay in the program typically ranges from 3 to 12 months depending on the needs of the family.

In 2023, Family Advocate programming remained consolidated although we continue to utilize Family Support Services (FSS) as an internal designation for the work of one staff member. The underlying interventions (e.g. FFT, Motivational Interviewing, PATHS etc.) and method of service delivery have remained the same since prior years. Throughout 2023, in addition to home-based service delivery, we continued to offer some sessions via video software (e.g. Zoom and Doxy.me). We were less reliant on this adaptation than in 2020-2021 but continued to offer remote services based on factors related to health and safety or family needs.

In 2023, the Family Advocate program served 67 families. Program staff assisted each of these families to develop and work on individualized goals and objectives. Information related to progress with these specific goals is detailed in ongoing progress notes and is often highlighted around the time of case termination. The macro goal for the advocate programs is rooted in family preservation and preventing out-of-home placement. Of the 48 clients whose services were terminated during 2023, 83% (40 identified clients) were “successfully” terminated from the program. Of the remaining 8 clients, 6 were deemed “neutral” termination due to minimal linkage prior to closure and 2 clients were closed “unsuccessfully” due to placement outside of the home.

Safe Harbor Programming

The Safe Harbor Coordinator continues to enhance community efforts to identify and respond to youth experiencing human trafficking. The Court published a postcard sized human trafficking quick reference guide that included risk indicators and a QR code to access the Assessment Center referral form. These reference guides have been distributed to community partners to ensure youth are identified and receive appropriate services.

In 2023, the Safe Harbor Coordinator received 25 referrals for youth. Eight cases were determined not to be trafficking situations, 6 cases were confirmed trafficking situations, and the balance were cases in which youth engaged in risky behaviors that increased their risk for trafficking exploitation. All youth referred were offered resources to connect with services that included, but were not limited to, mental health treatment providers, substance use treatment providers, financial assistance sources, educational and/or employment supports, human trafficking prevention education, and comprehensive case management.

The Safe Harbor Coordinator and key community stakeholders continued their efforts to strengthen the county’s systematic response to juvenile human trafficking exploitation by establishing protocols and facilitating community-based coordination of victim services. The multidisciplinary team strives to complete protocols to best identify and serve youth at risk for human trafficking by the end of 2024.

Fiscal Department

Human Resources

Over the course of the calendar year 2023, the court hired four new staff into existing positions, and one new hire into a newly funded position. The Assessment Center program has seen an expansion in referrals made, thus justifying the need for an additional Assessment Center Specialist. At the close of the calendar year, two positions remained unfilled – Intake/Diversion Officer and Victim Services Supervisor. Ongoing assessment of all programs and caseloads will determine if vacant positions will be filled, or modified, to fit changing needs of the court, programs, and community.

Funding

Funding for the Delaware County Probate/Juvenile Court is received from a variety of sponsors and sources. While the core administrative structure of the court is funded from county funds, the court has been able to supplement many of its programs with grants and contracts, as well as the fees and fines collected.

General Fund

At the beginning of the 2023 fiscal year, the court received approval for appropriations from the county, including the carryforward requested from 2022, for an available budget of \$5,185,234.24. The total general fund expenses, including three courtroom upgrades, totaled \$4,940,448.40. The court requested that \$93,516.17 be carried over from FY2023 to FY2024. These carryover expenses include youth placement costs, guardianship attorney fees, and software licenses. With the inclusion of the carryover requests, the court returned \$151,269.67 to the county general fund. This return is due to employee benefit selections versus those budgeted and the reduction in placement expenses in 2023.

Outside Funding Sources

A large portion of funding received from outside sources comes from the Department of Youth Services RECLAIM grant. The award to Delaware County for 2023 was \$830,433.88; this program runs from July 1 to June 30. The amount noted above was for the timeframe of July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023. The DYS RECLAIM grant funds nine court programs, including a pro-social program held at Stockhands for Healing, and a Race, Equity, and Inclusion Coordinator. This grant supports a portion of fifteen positions within the Juvenile Court.

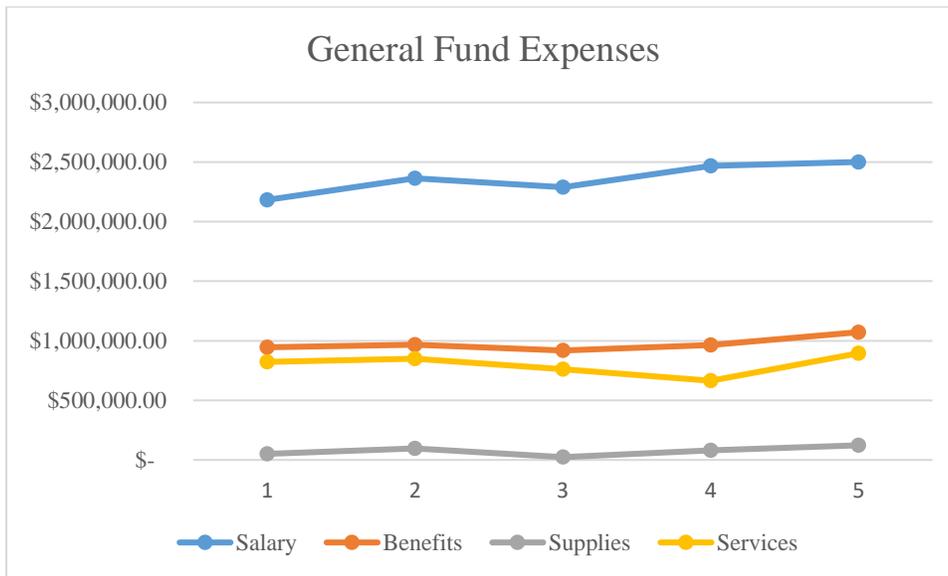
The other large source of outside funding is received from the Ohio Attorney General's Office – Victims of Crime Division, \$167,299.94. Two court programs are funded by this sponsor, the Victim Services program and the Court Appointed Special Advocate program. These programs support a portion of six employees. The calendar year on this project runs from October 1 to September 30. In-kind support is a requirement of this funding, either by volunteer hours or cash support. For the project year of 2023, the CASA program was required to provide \$27,630.01 in in-kind volunteer hours (1842 hours). During the project period, the 69 volunteers provided 7257.26 hours and travelled 69,343.70 miles, more than 5.5 times of the required amount. Additionally, as the CASA program operates in two

counties, Union and Delaware, both counties contribute a cash match to fully fund this award. Union County provided \$58,256.86 in salary support for the two FTEs serving cases originating from that court. Additionally, the Delaware County Probate/Juvenile Court’s General Fund supported the remaining salary and benefits of the other FTEs.

Expenses

For the calendar year of 2023, the total expenses in the general funds rose by \$414,066.73 or 9.92%. A majority of this cost is due to the court upgrades (\$80,752.10) and the increased cost of the Central Ohio Youth Center (COYC) agreement for 2023 (increase of \$128,684).

As in previous years, expenses for Delaware County Probate/Juvenile Court are primarily salaries and benefits. The court ended 2023 with 59 employees on payroll and numerous volunteers. Two wage study adjustments were implemented in 2023: the first being a blanket \$3.50 increase for all full time employees effective the first pay period of 2023, and the second a market-value adjustment based on recently created pay bands, years of service, and mid-year evaluations. That said, the general fund expenses only increased in the salary line by \$34,208 or 1.04% while the extramural funds took a the brunt of this impact increasing by \$404,569.29.



General Fund	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Salary	\$2,182,076.89	\$2,362,937.04	\$2,287,129.28	\$2,465,929.78	\$2,500,138.02
Benefits	\$944,594.96	\$967,462.05	\$918,266.30	\$965,415.76	\$1,072,081.68

Supplies	\$50,598.09	\$97,354.71	\$23,458.18	\$80,035.48	\$122,650.27
Services	\$823,090.55	\$849,746.56	\$761,599.89	\$664,263.59	\$894,841.37

The largest non-payroll item remains the agreement with Central Ohio Youth Center (COYC), costing \$414,712.92 in fiscal year 2023, an increase noted above. As stated previously, COYC applied Out of County credits to the contracted counties’ annual expense for 2022. This was not repeated in the 2023 calendar year. Please note that the services/charges line item does not account for all deposit refunds returned to probate cases, the monthly state rotary reparations, or restitution returned to victims of crime. Overall, the total expenses in 2023 increased by \$767,014.17 or 14.33%

Total Expenses	2022	2023
Salary	\$3,197,292.94	\$3,636,070.47
Benefits	\$1,303,281.50	\$1,393,709.32
Supplies	\$85,411.77	\$131,052.46
Services	\$763,656.22	\$955,823.35

