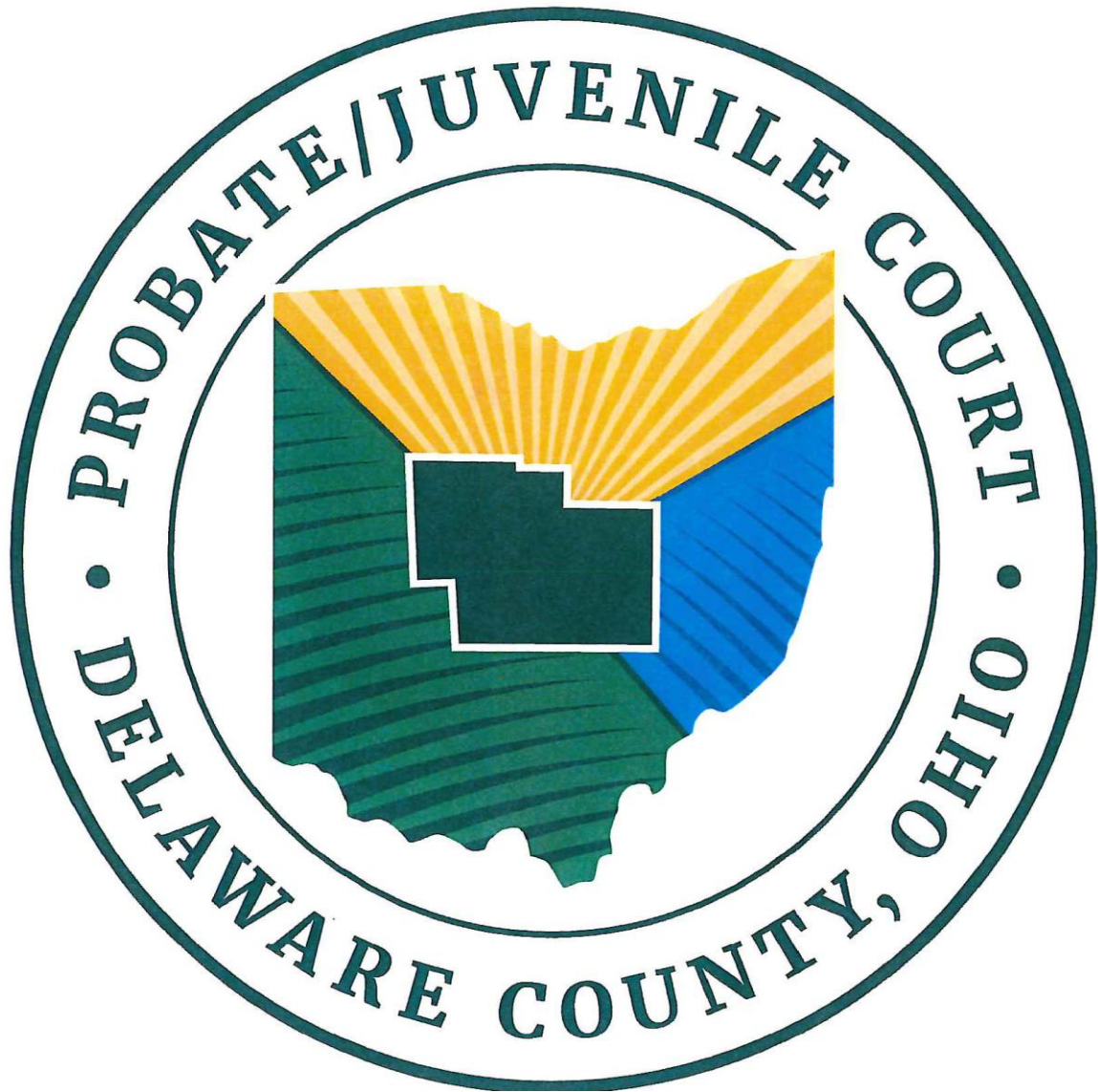




Delaware County Probate/Juvenile Court
Judge David A. Hejmanowski
2025 Annual Report

Message from the Judge

A court's annual report is not just a look at what business has occurred at the court in a given year; it is a snapshot in time – a way to review efficiency and operational effectiveness, but also the method by which long-term trends can later be discerned.

In Delaware County, this task has an extra dimension, 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. The statistics must also be viewed in the context of whether those case numbers are growing faster than the county's population.

Several post-pandemic increases in specific statistical areas began to ebb in 2025, both locally and in national statistical reviews. Auto thefts, for example, spiked in the years coming out of the pandemic and have now returned to a rate much closer to pre-pandemic numbers. Other increases, such as those in firearm possession and firearm-related offenses have continued to increase in our juvenile population.

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, 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 the immediate post-pandemic period, 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 continue to increase 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.

Despite this growth, however, our case clearance rate, percentage of over-age cases, compliance with state-mandated case timelines, and efficiency in completion of delinquency, child welfare and probate cases all remain among the best in the State of Ohio. Our mission is to retain that efficiency in the face of rapid growth, while never losing sight of our responsibility to the citizens of Delaware County and to the families and youth who we serve.

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
Nickolas McCoy, Magistrate
J. Michael Nicks, Magistrate
Robert Rice, 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
Beth Anne Chesnes, CASA Assistant
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
Dyan Fox, Juvenile Clerk
Andrea Henthorne, Juvenile Clerk
Randi Holzer, Juvenile Clerk
Jill Jutte, Probate Clerk
Marilyn Kinniard, Juvenile Clerk
Melanie Layton, Records Clerk
Lisa Murphy, Probate Clerk
Danielle Orsburn, Juvenile Clerk
Lisa Patterson, Probate Clerk
Karen Peaks, Probate Clerk
Rene Ray, Receptionist
Rachel Rehner, Probate Clerk

Fiscal

Karen Wadkins, Deputy Court
Administrator/Fiscal Coordinator
Angela Riley, Court Services

Analyst/Training Coordinator
Jessica Berry, Fiscal Specialist

Intake/Probation

Lisa Williamson, Director of Court
Services/Chief Probation Officer
Stacy Blair, City School Liaison/Intake
Supervisor
Sara Miller, Assessment Center Supervisor
Melanie Bange, Mentoring Coordinator
Nathan Bonofiglio, SAP/Community Service
Coordinator
Alan Bryan, Probation Officer
Brittany Gates, Intake/Diversion Officer
Mersadie Grady, Intake/Diversion Officer
Vikki Hardwick, County School Attendance
Officer
Michelle Leighty, Probation Officer
Amy Marzich, School Liaison
Sharon Moran, Family Advocate Coordinator
Megan Pentz, Probation Officer
Sydnee Rees, Intake/Diversion Officer
Kimberley Romoser, Treatment Court
Coordinator/Probation Officer
Ashley Stevens, Assessment Center Specialist
Anna Travis, Safe Harbor Coordinator

Mediation

Kira Crawford, Mediator
Dodie Davenport, Mediation Coordinator

Probate

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

Probate Court Statistics

Type of Filing	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Estates	542	602	653	663	610	582
Guardianship of Minors	27	24	20	36	14	29
Guardianship of Incompetents	64	63	70	94	83	76
Conservatorships	0	0	0	0	0	0
Testamentary Trusts	2	5	11	5	7	9
Civil Actions	14	24	28	18	16	22
Adoptions	34	44	46	45	35	28
Mental Commitment	3	1	5	3	1	2
Minor Settlement	14	15	14	27	5	29
Wrongful Death	7	13	14	23	24	18
Registration/Correction Birth Record	4	3	8	8	8	6
Change of Name	117	153	157	167	148	181
Marriage Applications Granted	871	876	989	900	916	1030
Miscellaneous Filings*	116	135	98	116	98	125
	1815	1823	2113	2105	1965	2137

* 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 as of 12.31.25	
Age	
18-30	330
31-50	174
51-70	90
71-89	60
90+	8
Total	662

Types of Adoptions Filed 2025	
Adult	4
Private	6
Private - Agency	7
Adoption Preplacement	1
Public Agency	3
Re-finalization	3
Stepparent	4
Total	28

2025 Marriage Licenses Issued by Month	
January	60
February	57
March	55
April	78
May	110
June	104
July	87
August	110
September	130
October	117
November	54
December	68
TOTAL	1030

<u>2025 New Estate Case Action</u>	
TYPE OF ESTATE	Total
Ancillary Administration	4
Full Administration	330
Probate Will	1
Release From Administration	106
Real Estate Transfer	29
Special Administration	8
Short Form Release	4
Summary Release	42
Taxes	0
Wrongful Death	14
Will for Record Only	20
TOTAL	558

Types of Probate Hearings Scheduled in 2025	Number of Hearings
Adult Name Change	3
Adult Adoption	9
Private Agency Adoption	15
Pre-Placement Adoption	1
Private Placement Adoption	10
Public Agency Adoption	3
Foreign Adoption Re-finalization	2
Stepparent Adoption	15
Appointment of Co-Guardian	6
Appointment of Fiduciary	15
Appointment of Guardian	113
Appointment of Trustee	0
Wrongful Death	1
Evidentiary	0
Unspecified Hearing	207
Case Review	11
Non-Oral Hearing	1
Status Conference	27
Insolvency	4
Minor Claim	28
Minor Claim & Dispense Guardianship	0
Minor Claim with Guardianship	2
Minor Name Change	20
Will Admission	4
Allowance of Claim Fiduciaries	1
Creditor Claim	3
Total	501

Results of Probate Scheduled Hearings in 2025	Number of Hearings
Continued	90
Failure to appear	9
Dismissed	6
Informal / No Recording	2
Heard	345
Non-Oral Complete	4
Vacated	45
Total	501

A Total of 998 Inventory and Accounts were filed and reviewed by non-oral hearing during 2025.

Juvenile Court Statistics

Traffic Citations Filed	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Speed	326	238	237	219	246	251	261
Assured Clear Distance /Hit Skip	131	78	110	103	132	102	110
Operating Vehicle Under Influence	17	18	20	18	16	8	5
Failure to Control	60	56	54	73	47	44	53
No License/Permit, Suspended or Restrictions	61	56	39	31	27	42	38
Seat Restraint violations	31	13	24	15	14	7	10
Failure to Yield/Right of Way	92	55	66	70	75	55	81
Use of Wireless Electronic Device/Texting	4	1	0	0	3	9	9
Distracted Driving (New law 2019)	15	14	5	8	2	4	0
Traffic Control Signal Violations	45	23	37	31	25	32	31
Improper Driving Actions*	52	43	51	43	67	57	44
Miscellaneous Actions	35	21	17	27	31	21	22
Total	869	616	660	638	685	632	664

*Encompasses various charges including lane violations, improper turns, and reckless operation.

In 2025, a total of 796 delinquency and unruly charges were filed, resulting in 308 formal cases. These cases led to 196 adjudicated charges involving 113 youth. The remaining charges were addressed through diversion, dismissal, or are still pending resolution. Additionally, 33 counts of either Violation of Court Order or Violation of Probation were filed against 24 individuals during the same period.

Charges Filed /Adjudicated in 2025 – some charges remain pending into 2026*		
	Number of Charges Filed	Number of charges adjudicated
Aggravated Murder/Murder	2	0
Involuntary Manslaughter	1	0
Assault and Menacing		
Assault	68	30
Vehicular Assault	4	0
Menacing	19	8
Strangulation	2	1
Sexual Offenses		
Rape / Sexual Battery	10	3
Pandering/Illegal Use of a Minor	18	7

Sexual Imposition	11	5
Disseminating Material Harmful to Juveniles	2	0
Voyeurism/Public Indecency	0	1
Kidnapping, Restraint, Extortion & Coercion	1	0
Property Offenses		
Arson	2	1
Criminal Damaging	23	10
Criminal Mischief	12	3
Vandalism	7	0
Robbery, Burglary, Trespass, and Safecracking		
Robbery/Burglary	9	5
Criminal Trespassing/Breaking & Entering	31	4
Possession of Criminal Tools	4	0
Theft and Fraud		
Theft	43	5
Misuse of Credit Cards	0	1
Identify Fraud/Falsification/ Forgery/Counterfeit	1	1
Receiving Stolen Property	12	7
Unauthorized Use of a Vehicle	1	0
Offenses Against the Public Peace		
Disorderly Conduct	92	22
Harassment – Telephone/Other/Intimidation	4	3
Inducing Panic/False Alarm	4	0
Misconduct at Emergency	1	0
Offenses Against the Family		
Domestic Violence	46	5
Violating Protection Order	1	1
Offenses Against Justice and Public Administration		
Obstructing Justice/Disrupting Public Services	27	3
Tampering with Evidence/False information	8	2
Resisting Arrest/Failure to Comply	8	2
Harassment with a Bodily Substance	1	1
Conspiracy, Attempt and Complicity, Weapons Control, Corrupt Activity		
Weapons Control/Possession/Conceal	7	2
Complicity / Attempt to Commit	4	2
Offenses Drugs/Alcohol		
Possession of a Controlled Substance	11	6
Possession of Drugs / Drug Paraphernalia	15	4
Offenses Involving Underage Persons / Alcohol	6	4
Other Offenses		
Unruly Child	203	42
Prohibitions Relating to Tobacco	9	2

Habitual / Unruly Truant	43	2
Curfew	3	0
Other Offenses	20	1
Total	796	196

*73 cases from previous years were adjudicated in 2025.

2025 Filed Complaints by Zip/Gender

Juvenile Age at Case Filing Date

City Name	Zip code	F	M	U	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Age Total
MAYSVILLE KY	41056	1											1			1
ASHLEY	43003	2	2									1	1	2		4
CENTERBURG	43011	1	1								1			1		2
DELAWARE	43015	43	113		1		7	4	13	38	30	20	24	19		156
DUBLIN	43016		1								1					1
DUBLIN	43017		1											1		1
GALENA	43021	3	1						1			2		1		4
HILLIARD	43026		1												1	1
LEWIS CENTER	43035	10	23								2	4	20	7		33
MOUNT VERNON	43050		1										1			1
NEW ALBANY	43054		1										1			1
NEWARK	43055		1											1		1
OSTRANDER	43061		1									1				1
POWELL	43065	8	9								2	2	9	3	1	17
REYNOLDSBURG	43068		1											1		1
SUNBURY	43074	4	9						2	1	1	6	1	2		13
WESTERVILLE Franklin	43081	3	2	1		1				1		2	2			6
WESTERVILLE Delaware	43082	2	8					1		2	1		3	3		10
WORTHINGTON	43085		3											3		3
CANAL WINCHESTER	43110	1											1			1
GALLOWAY	43119		1										1			1
GROVE CITY	43123	1												1		1
COLUMBUS	43203		1										1			1
COLUMBUS	43204		1				1									1
COLUMBUS	43205		1											1		1
COLUMBUS	43207		1											1		1
COLUMBUS	43211	1	1									1		1		2
COLUMBUS	43212			1											1	1
COLUMBUS	43213		1									1				1
COLUMBUS	43219		1											1		1
COLUMBUS	43220		1									1				1
COLUMBUS	43221		1											1		1
COLUMBUS	43223		1											1		1
COLUMBUS	43224		5							1			2	2		5
COLUMBUS	43228		4										1	3		4
COLUMBUS	43230	1		1									2			2

COLUMBUS	43231	1	1									1		1		2
COLUMBUS	43232		2							1				1		2
COLUMBUS	43235	1	3											2	2	4
COLUMBUS	43240	4	4						1	3			2	2		8
MARION	43302		2						1					1		2
CARDINGTON	43315		1										1			1
MARENGO	43334	2						1	1							2
RICHWOOD	43344		1										1			1
ZANESVILLE	43701	1								1						1
NEW LONDON	44851		1					1								1
MANSFIELD	44907		1												1	1
WHEELERSBURG	45694		1									1				1
CONVOY	45832		1												1	1
	Totals		216	2	1	1	8	5	18	46	43	43	75	63	6	309

Total Charges Filed by Classification						
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Felony	53	110	145	111	144	125
Misdemeanor	325	325	371	479	471	404
Unruly	219	219	239	313	265	267
Total	597	653	755	903	879	796

2025 ANNUAL STATISTICS AS REPORTED TO OHIO SUPREME COURT

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	T	V
	Delinquency	Traffic	Dependency, Neglect	Unruly	Adult Cases	Motion for Permanent Custody	Custody, Change of Custody, Visitation	Support Enforcement	Parentage	U.I.F.S.A.	All Others	Total	Visiting Judge
Pending beginning of period	76	25	4	21	8	0	5	1	0	0	0	140	1
New cases filed	217	587	30	77	65	0	16	2	0	0	20	1,014	2
Cases transferred in, reactivated, or redesignated	169	44	0	37	37	2	14	13	0	0	3	319	3
Total cases	462	656	34	135	110	2	35	16	0	0	23	1,473	6

TERMINATIONS BY:	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	T	V
Trial by Judge	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
Trial by Magistrate	6	2	1	0	1	0	10	3	0	0	1	24	0
Dismissal by party, judge, or prosecutor	71	50	8	47	49	0	6	4	0	0	3	238	2
Admission to judge	20	316	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	340	1
Admission to magistrate	117	101	11	28	7	0	2	5	0	0	2	273	0
Certification/Waiver granted	1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	1	0
Unavailability of party for trial	148	151	0	31	38	0	5	2	0	0	4	379	0
Transfer to another judge or court	36	11	2	9	0	1	6	0	0	0	0	65	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	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	16	0
TOTAL Terminations	404	631	24	117	95	1	29	15	0	0	23	1,339	3
Pending end of period	58	25	10	18	15	1	6	1	0	0	0	134	3

Clearance Rate	105%	100%	80%	103%	93%	50%	97%	100%	0%	0%	100%	100%	60%
Time Guideline (months)	6	3	3	3	6	9	6.7	12	12	3	6	X	X
Cases pending beyond time guideline	4	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0
Overage Rate	7%	8	0	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	7	0%
Number of months oldest case overage	3	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	X	0
Number of informal cases	73	0	0	1,635	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1,710	0

Abused Neglect Dependent Charges Filed 2025			
Description of Individual Charges	Charges filed	Adjudicated	Pending
Abused Child - Exhibits Injury	8	3	7
Abused Child - No Conviction Required	1	0	1
Abused Child - Child Out of Home Abuse	11	1	3
Abused Child - Victim Sexual Activity	1	0	1
Abused Child- Acts Causing Injury	11	2	5
Neglected Child - Injury by Omission	30	3	12
Neglected Child - Lack Parental Care	27	2	13
Neglected Child - Special care	16	1	8
Neglected Child -Abandoned	2	0	0
Neglected Child-Parental Refusal	29	1	12
Dependent Child - Residential Status Act	19	2	5
Dependent Child - Residential Status Danger	19	2	5
Dependent Child- Environmental Condition	34	12	13
Dependent Child- Homeless	7	0	2
Dependent Child- Parental condition	34	3	13
Child Deserted by Parent	1	1	0
Total	250	33	100

Miscellaneous	
Orders granting access to children to Jobs and Family Services	6

Motion for Permanent Custody	
Filed 2025	3
Carryover from 2024	1
Granted in 2025	2
Dismissed/denied 2025	0
Carryover into 2026	2

The Juvenile Court retains jurisdiction over a limited number of domestic relations cases that arise from Abuse, Neglect or Dependency matters. In 2025, 25 new Custody, Visitation or Child Support cases were filed and approximately 33 previously pending matters were resolved in Juvenile Court.

Juvenile Hearings Scheduled in 2025	
Adjudication/Disposition	107
Initial Bridges Hearing	2
Case Review	460
Change of Plea	39
Child Support	8
Civil Protection Order	30
Competency	23
Competency Attainment	62
Compliance Review	206
Contempt	12
Detention	66
Detention Review	63
Disposition	208
Evidentiary Hearing	52
Family Treatment Court	16
Formal Arraignment	527
Hearing – all other	99
Impose Sentence	2
In Camera	29
Jury Trail	9
Motion	126
Non-Oral Hearing	48
Pre-Trial	970
Probable Cause	35
Restitution	9
Sealing/Expungement	77
Show Cause	17
Specialized Case Review	7
Specialized Hearing	2
Status	136
Suppression	3
Traffic – Formal Arraignment	640
Treatment Court	376
Trial	332
Violation of Court Orders/Probation	78
Total	4876

Hearing Results	Total
Continued	590
Denials	106
Dismissed without Hearing	1
Failure to Appear	227
Heard	3092
Hearing Type Converted	58
Hearing held Informally	400
Non-Oral hearing Complete	19
Vacated	383
Total	4876

Clerical Services

The Clerical Services Department assigns staff in both the Probate and Juvenile Courts. Each department operates independently and follows local rules created for each Court. Clerical staff are involved in all areas of the Court by processing filings from the beginning to the end of the case. 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, mail, and E-filing via a client registered system. Cross training between probate and juvenile clerical staff continues with the goal of providing uninterrupted services to both Courts as needed.

Our clerical staff believe that it is important to continually seek ways to improve our service to the court and the public we serve. We emphasize the need to stay updated on the latest legal changes and their impact on the Courts by offering training opportunities. Participation in Court-wide and departmental team meetings reinforces the importance of education for all staff. Attendance at an annual conference for deputy clerks provides opportunities for networking and learning about the latest practices of other Ohio Probate and Juvenile Courts. Additionally, staff have year-round access to events developed by the court's training coordinator and are encouraged to participate in Supreme Court training sessions.

One department head oversees both Probate and Juvenile Clerical Services staff. In 2025, the Probate Court clerical staff included an office manager and five deputy clerks. Each clerk was assigned a specific Probate case type to ensure efficient processing for the duration of pending cases. The Juvenile Court clerical staff in 2025 included nine deputy clerks. Their areas of assignment include traffic court, records, courtroom services, treatment court, jury services, docketing and processing, serve as assignment commissioners, and client services.

In 2025, juvenile clerks processed 43,205 docket entries in 2,223 cases and probate clerks processed 10,040 docket entries in 1,736 cases. In addition, the clerks handed a total of 11,213 incoming phone calls and completed service of over 14,000 documents.

Document Service Types		
	Probate	Juvenile
Certified Mail	395	235
Sheriff Service	0	514
Subpoena	4	662
Personal	0	36
Electronic Service	2251	10,078
Publication	17	13

In 2025, the clerical department also issued 348 summons to appear in 328 cases and created/issued 26 warrants; 19 of which were executed or recalled. There were 525 appointments for a public defender and 149 appointments for a Guardian ad Litem.

The court's records office is dedicated to auditing, reviewing, and preserving filed documents for the Court. By scanning documents, the office has streamlined processes, in turn saving time and enhancing efficiency. Digital images allow for electronic access, eliminating the need to locate physical case files. In 2025, the Probate and Juvenile Clerks Office scanned 51,471-page images and sent 206 boxes of documents to the Delaware County Records Center to upload onto archival microfilm rolls, ensuring historic preservation. The records office is also responsible for providing background check requests and processed 226 requests in 2025.

The Probate and Juvenile Court adheres to the Supreme Court of Ohio's standards for language interpreters, primarily relying on certified in-person interpreters for court proceedings. In 2025, the Court scheduled 64 interpretation events at a total cost of \$15,132.45. Most requests (80%) were for Spanish, while other languages included Arabic, American Sign Language (ASL), Uzbek, Mandarin, and Portuguese.

When a case required an interpreter for a rare language and no local interpreters were available, telephonic interpreters were utilized for 11 sessions, totaling 121 minutes of interpretation.

The Court's websites continue to serve as valuable resources for the public. In 2025, the Probate Court website received 159,451 page views, with the most popular sections being record searches, marriage license application/information and estate pages. The Juvenile Court website received 25,145 page visits, with record searches, local rules, and hearing details being the top areas of interest. Over 80% accessed webpages on a desktop and 42% using a mobile device. The E-services portal has been heavily utilized, with 13,713 e-filings, 977 e-marriage license applications, and 347 juvenile e-payments processed during the year.

Court Visitor Program

The Court Visitor Program is a guardianship monitoring program through the Probate Court. The program utilizes volunteers to visit with wards and guardians involved with the court. These visitors serve as the court's eyes and ears, by visiting persons under guardianship to see whether they are receiving appropriate care, to ensure that the guardian is current with reporting requirements and to assist the guardian and/or ward with linkage to community resources. The visits are usually conducted at the ward's home to allow the court visitor to observe the ward in the natural environments. The program allows the court to ensure the ward's needs are being met, the ward is safe and being cared for, and the ward is in the least restrictive alternative for guardianship. The Court Visitor program also provides the Probate Court an additional mechanism for following up on any complaints and/or concerns noted with existing guardianships. In 2025, a total of 281 visits were conducted. Sixty-seven wards were aged 55 or above and 153 of the guardians were 55 or above.

Intake Department

The Intake Department is the first contact in the system for youth and families. The department screens all complaints through a process called triage to determine what course of action that will be taken. These decisions are made in accordance with Ohio Juvenile Rule 9. Options available to the triage team for cases include referral to the CARE Center, Diversion Conference, Restorative Justice Program, or formal filing with the court. Once a decision is made about the direction of the case, it will be assigned to an Intake Officer, and they will follow the procedures outlined for each program.

Diversion

The Court has been running a diversion program for over 30 years. Diversion is an opportunity for youth who have been charged with a crime to be held accountable for their action while not incurring a juvenile record. Juveniles are referred to diversion via review by a team of juvenile court staff. During this process, the team screens the charges and chooses the least restrictive path for the juvenile. Eligible offenses for diversion include unruly, misdemeanors that are not offenses of serious violence, property crimes that do not exceed restitution of \$100.00, and certain sexting offenses. Additionally, to be eligible for the Diversion Program, the youth shall be a first-time offender and score low or moderate on the OYAS Diversion Screening tool. Youth with previous court contact may be admitted to the program if contact with the court has been greater than 12 months, with a different type of offense.

Participation in diversion is voluntary. To participate in the Diversion Program, the youth must admit that the charge is substantially true. Once a youth has been referred to diversion, the officer will meet in person with the youth and family to conduct a diversion conference. The youth, parents/guardians, and court staff will work together to create a diversion agreement which could include a variety of terms with the goal of reducing the youth's criminogenic risk, improving the

likelihood of success. This agreement shall also specify the length of time for which the terms shall be completed, not to exceed 180 days.

At times when multiple youth are charged out of an incident, the Court may conduct a group diversion. The purpose of group diversion is to minimize blame and increase accountability among the youth. This allows for consistency and fair and equitable distribution of diversion terms.

Upon successful completion of the agreement, the officer will submit the case for dismissal by the court. In 2025, the court served 88 youth in Diversion, of which 90% of the youth successfully completed the program.

Intervention in Lieu (Hold Open)

In 2025, the intake team served 62 youth who qualified for the Intervention in Lieu (Hold Open) program. A hold open can be used when a youth is charged with an offense that may have otherwise been diverted, but the charge(s) did not meet the criteria due to restitution, victimization, degree of offense, youthful age of offender, need for Guardian ad litem, or prior court contact. Youth served in the intervention in lieu program are not adjudicated. They are given up to six months to complete court orders. If they successfully complete the orders, their case(s) is/are dismissed and sealed. This gives the youth an opportunity to be held accountable without having an official court record/adjudication. When working with youth, the officer will utilize evidence-based practices such as Motivational Interviewing and Forward Thinking Journals to build skills that will support the juvenile in making pro-social decisions, reducing their criminogenic risk, and lowering their likelihood of incurring additional charges.

To qualify for this program, the juvenile must have been charged with a status offense, 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 prior to the current offense. Once the juvenile has entered an admission to an offense, the intake officer will meet with the youth and family 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), and the 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 total of a minimum of one hour over a ninety-day period. During those meetings the intake officer will work with the juvenile utilizing motivational interviewing to help reach the program goals. In 2025, 90% of the youth on intervention in lieu supervision were terminated successfully.

General Intake

The intake officers also served 88 youth who qualified for the General Intake program. General intake supervision varies from the intervention in lieu program in that the youth in this program are adjudicated by the Judge/Magistrate. To qualify for the general intake program, the juvenile can have a status, misdemeanor, or felony charge. The charges may have resulted from either a single incident or multiple incidents. 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. The intake officer will provide 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 minimum of one hour over a ninety-day period. When working with youth, intake uses evidence-based practices such as Motivational Interviewing and Forward Thinking Journals to build skills that will support the juvenile in making pro-social decisions, reducing their criminogenic risk, and lowering their likelihood of incurring additional charges. 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. Over the course of the fiscal year, 85% of the youth on General Intake supervision were terminated successfully.

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 ensure adequate attention and quick resolutions to cases. The dedicated docket hears cases regarding truancy, unruly activity at school, failure to send children to school, and adult contributing charges. Attendance 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 students with attendance concerns and attempt to address barriers to attendance. If that is unsuccessful in curbing the truant/unruly behavior, a mediation is scheduled. 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

Truancy has always been challenging. Generally, there are underlying issues/barriers for a student's lack of school attendance. For the 2025/2026 school year, mediations for all school districts are being offered in person and via Zoom. The utilization of Zoom mediations to create the SAIP improved the completion/participation rate for several school districts. The Zoom/online platform is beneficial for working parents. This allows the parent(s) to attend but not miss several hours of work. At the informal meeting and at mediation, the goal is to assist families with attendance barriers. School and court staff can link a family/student with services (i.e. family advocate/counseling/case management) and provide needed items (i.e. bus passes/alarm clocks) to help family reduce barriers and improve attendance. For the 2025/2026 school year, there have been 26 truancy charges and 64 adult contributing charges filed for all districts served. This includes Delaware City, Olentangy, Big Walnut, Buckeye Valley, and Delaware Area Career Center. All 26 truancy cases were diverted. To date, three (3) truancy filings have been adjudicated. One was from a filing this school year and the other two were from 2024/2025 school year. These three cases were adjudicated on 11/19/25, 4/14/26, and 5/4/26.

School numbers for the 2025/2026 school year

2025-2026 School Year	Delaware City	Buckeye Valley	Big Walnut	Olentangy	DACC	Total
Informal Meeting	377	131	157	662	47	1374
Mediations scheduled	259	29	61	221	9	579
Contributing Charges Filed	39	0	12	13	0	64
Truancy Charge Filed *	14	0	4	8	0	26
Diversion Successful	9	0	2	3	0	14
Adjudicated	1	0	0	2	0	3
Pending	4	0	2	3	0	9

*All juveniles charged with truancy are offered diversion

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 and placed many of the victim advocacy functions with the Delaware County Prosecutor's Office. Despite these changes, the court is committed to assisting victims following all disposition hearings with notification of any case reviews, termination hearings, as well as 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.

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 2024, the program conducted 5 sessions of 5 classes each with 23 juveniles successfully completing the program.

Restitution Tracking and Compliance Program

In January 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 2025, the Court distributed \$20,969.11 in restitution to victims of juvenile crime. Of those funds, \$17,035.68 was paid directly by the juvenile offender and \$3,933.43 was earned and distributed through restitution work.

Mentoring Programs

The court continues to oversee the M.O.M.S. Mentoring Program. M.O.M.S. pairs pregnant/new teen mothers with experienced mothers as mentors. The mentees in M.O.M.S. are determined to need support with independent living and parenting practices. Mentors assist new/expectant families with next phases of parenting, child development, scheduling/maintaining of appointments, and family self-care. M.O.M.S. utilizes Parents as Teachers curricula for child bonding activities and developmental information. The mentees for M.O.M.S. receive referrals from the school system, alternative schooling programs and Juvenile Court (especially Girls

Group). As of December 2025, mentoring programs matched 3 moms with mentors and found other solutions for two referrals.

Mentoring Programs supported young parents with two innovative hands-on mentorship groups. The first program occurred early in the school year for which mentoring programs staff facilitated a weekly pregnancy group for court-involved youth. Conversations around basic needs and relationships were at the forefront of conversation. The second program occurred once a week at Goal Digital Academy where mentoring programs staff supported a large group, drop-in course of six families. Every week focused on a different area of parenting such as safety, transportation, and financial support.

In summer of 2025, mentoring programs re-evaluated adolescent needs. Mentoring programs additionally partnered with Triple P, Ohio Rise, and the Family and Children First Council to provide parents parenting education while their children were allowed to explore local spaces such as the Arts Castle and Preservation Parks with court staff. Additionally, mentoring staff continue to co-facilitate Parent Project sessions. Moving into 2026, mentoring programs plan to continue to support teen parents through community-based matches and groups, while shifting into more dynamic family support.

Assessment Center/C.A.R.E. Center

A preventive and diversionary program of the Juvenile Court, the Assessment Center provides a place for youth and families to obtain needed services 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 court to further divert youth from exposure to 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. Another goal of the Assessment Center is to collaborate 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. And finally, the goal of the Assessment Center is to bring a strength-based, collaborative approach to 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 to help our youth and families.

This year we looked at changing the name of the Assessment Center, due to not being clinical and doing assessments. After a lot of thought, the team came up with the name C.A.R.E.

Center, representing who we serve (Community), how we serve families (Advocacy and Resources) and what we hope to accomplish by working with families (Empowerment).

In 2025, the Assessment Center had a total of 199 referrals and served 144 youth and families. These families received services from mentoring programs, Parent Project, Syntero, Girls Group, Family Advocate program, Family and Children First Council, OhioRise, Family Resource Center, Gracehaven, food pantries, United Way 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. The youth and families were screened, 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

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 20 class hours and runs for 10 weeks. We currently have 5 facilitators and offer the program two times per year. In 2025, we were able to serve 20 parents with two virtual classes.

Restorative Justice Programming

The Restorative Justice Program (RJP) was established through a Department of Youth Services (DYS) grant in 2024 and began accepting referrals in early 2025. This program offers the opportunity for youth and their families to repair harm caused within the community and/or between individuals. Through restorative justice, harmed individuals, groups and businesses are able to have a voice in the court process and discuss what they need to feel whole. RJP also allows those who caused harm the opportunity to repair relationships and take accountability for their actions, by acknowledging who was impacted, how they were impacted and how they can move forward.

There are three ways to participate in this program: 1) through a referral to the C.A.R.E. Center for any at-risk youth who has caused harm to a person or community, 2) with a charge that has an identified victim and the case has been diverted, and finally, 3) for any appropriate case that has a victim and the case has been formalized and disposed of. At-risk referrals for RJP can be received from any community member, parent, or agency. Youth with a charge are eligible for RJP if there is an identifiable victim (harmed party) in their case and the youth and victim are willing to participate.

RJP conferences are guided by trained facilitators to ensure the focus of the discussion is the incident and addressing the harm caused. During an RJP conference, the offender and the

victim (harmed party) along with their support person(s) come together to discuss what happened, what needs to happen to repair the harm, and to rebuild a sense of community for all persons involved. RJP is offered voluntarily for at-risk and court involved youth with the intention of creating a safe place for all parties involved. Following a successful conference, everyone in attendance creates an agreement that outlines what is expected to repair the harm. Conference facilitators then follow up with everyone to ensure that this agreement is upheld. In 2025, RJP received 37 referrals, with 2 youth successfully completing the program.

CASA

In 2025, The CASA Program of Delaware and Union Counties continued its strong advocacy for abused, neglected, and dependent children. This year, the program added 13 new CASA/GAL volunteers to its roster while continuing to create community awareness of the importance of the CASA Mission in Delaware and Union Counties.

Volunteer/Case Statistics: (Delaware and Union Counties)

Volunteer CASA Advocates	54	
Volunteer Total Case Hours	6,000	
Miles Driven by Volunteers for Casework	55,000	
Number of Children Served	173	
Female	77	
Male	96	
Child Age Range	0-5	66
	6-11	45
	12-15	29
	16-17	25
	18+	8

In 2025, 81 children's cases were closed with a CASA/GAL Volunteer involved. For those 81 children, the following outcomes were achieved.

Reunification achieved	21
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Adopted	5
Legal Custody (relative)	31
Child turned 18/21	5
Other (case transferred, removed from docket etc. legal custody to non-relative, remained in home)	19

CASA/GAL volunteers continue to be a strong voice in the courtroom for abused, neglected, and dependent children. While the National CASA volunteer retention rate is 18 months, the CASA Program of Delaware and Union Counties had a retention rate of 42.3 months as of 2025. Additionally, CASA/GAL volunteers served as Fostering Futures mentors on 6 cases. Fostering Futures is a program within the CASA organization in which volunteers assist aging out teens with goal planning, education, budgeting, and resources. They also help with implementing avenues in which teens can become independent and achieve their goals after foster care. Volunteers remain as a contact for these teens as they navigate life after emancipation from the child welfare system. 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

In 2025, the mediation department received 555 mediation referrals compared to 658 in 2024. Consistently, truancy mediations have made up the bulk of the mediation referrals for 2025. Numbers are slightly down from a high of 601 referrals for the 2023-2024 school year to 520 for the 2025-2026 school year. The goal in scheduling mediations is to continue to accommodate each school district and their families. Delaware City Schools have continued to utilize Zoom to conduct their mediations, while Delaware County schools continue with in-person mediation, held at the school. This totals 52 school buildings, to include high schools, middle schools, elementary and various alternative schools.

Child protection mediation referrals for 2025 were down with the Delaware County Department of Jobs and Family Services referring 20 cases to mediation, down from 34 in 2024. The mediation department only had 1 referral for custody mediation for 2025, from 6 referrals in 2024. Juvenile offender mediation referrals have dropped slightly from 15 in 2024 to 9 referrals for 2025, with the addition of 4 Adult Contributing cases referred.

2025 Mediation Statistics

Type of Mediation	Referred	Mediated	Outcomes*	Hours**
Attendance***	520	459	459-F/1-N/40-OT	1,040
Delinquency	9	6	6-F/ 3-N	20
Child Protection	20	4	0-F/4-P/16-N	80
Parenting/Custody	1	1	1-F/0-P/0-N/0-OT	3
Adult Contributing	4	4	4-P	4
Assessment Center	1	1	0-F/1-P/0-OT	4
Probate	0	0	0-NO	0
TOTALS	555	475	466-F/9-P/40-N/40-OT	1151

*Outcomes are full, partial, none, or other, including no show or not suitable for mediation.

**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).

Mediations by School District and School

School	No Show	Other	SAIP	Total
Olentangy Schools				
DACC	0	0	8	8
Olentangy High School	2	1	24	27
Berlin High School	2	0	27	29
Liberty High School	0	2	18	20
Orange High School	2	0	46	48
Oasis	2	0	31	33
Berlin Middle School	1	0	1	2

Berkshire Middle School	0	0	3	3
Hyatts Middle School	0	0	2	2
Liberty Middle School	0	0	2	2
Orange Middle School	0	0	11	11
Shanahan Middle School	3	0	20	23
Heritage Elementary	0	0	1	1
Liberty Tree Elementary	0	0	1	1
Oak Creek Elementary	0	0	1	1
Peachblow Elementary	0	0	1	1
Total				212
Big Walnut Schools				
Big Walnut High School	0	1	15	16
Big Walnut Middle School	3	2	23	28
Big Walnut Intermediate	0	0	1	1
Big Walnut Elementary	0	0	5	5
General Rosecrans Elementary	0	0	2	2
Prairie Run Elementary	0	1	1	2
Hylen Souders Elementary	0	0	2	2
Total				56
Buckeye Valley Schools				
Buckeye Valley High School	1	2	14	17
Buckeye Valley Middle School	0	2	9	11
Buckeye Valley West Elementary	0	1	1	2
Total				30
Delaware City Schools				
Hays H.S. & Willis Education Center	1	12	70	83

Dempsey Middle School	1	8	56	65
Carlisle Elementary	0	0	3	3
Conger Elementary	0	2	9	11
Schultz Elementary	0	2	13	15
Woodward Elementary	3	3	25	31
Smith Elementary	0	1	12	13
Total				221
Ohio School For the Deaf	0	0	1	1
Total	21	40	459	520

Juvenile Treatment Court

Delaware County's Juvenile Treatment Court serves as a vital intervention for youth involved in the justice system due to substance use and co-occurring mental health disorders. This specialized docket focuses on youth ages 14 to 17 who are at moderate to high risk of reoffending and have a diagnosed substance use disorder. The program follows a structured, four-phase model centered on accountability, treatment, and support. Through intensive case management, therapeutic services, regular court reviews, drug and alcohol screening, and community supervision, the Juvenile Treatment Court fosters the development of prosocial skills and lasting behavioral change. A structured incentive system including verbal praise, certificates, gift cards, privilege advancements, and milestone celebrations, helps motivate participants and reinforces progress.

The multidisciplinary team includes a bench member, probation officers, treatment providers, legal counsel, Guardians ad Litem, and families, all working together to support each youth's recovery journey. The Ohio Supreme Court identifies Juvenile Treatment Courts as evidence-based, problem-solving dockets that promote accountability, sobriety, and personal growth. Delaware County's Juvenile Treatment Court reflects these standards by equipping young people with the tools they need for lifelong recovery and successful community integration.

In 2025, the Juvenile Treatment Court docket served twelve youths. Three of the participants graduated. The program had one neutral termination and zero unsuccessful terminations. As the number of participants grows, the program's intensive, individualized approach allows for deeper engagement and stronger relationships between youth, court staff, and treatment providers. All participants demonstrated consistent involvement in services and continued progressing through the court's structured four-phase model.

In December 2025, the Juvenile Treatment Court earned recertification from the Ohio Supreme Court's Commission on Specialized Dockets, reaffirming its commitment to best practices and effective outcomes.

Family Dependency Treatment Court

This specialized docket serves parents involved with Delaware County Job and Family Services due to substance use or untreated mental health needs. It offers a structured path toward recovery, stability, and family reunification. Participation in the program is voluntary and includes adherence to individualized case plans, attendance at regular court hearings, frequent and random drug screenings, and engagement in community-based treatment services. The program also incorporates an incentive structure designed to reinforce progress. Participants may receive verbal recognition, certificates, gift cards, and increased visitation as they achieve recovery milestones.

In 2025, the Family Dependency Treatment Court served six participants. The program had three participants terminated as neutral, and three were unsuccessfully terminated. These outcomes reflect both the challenging nature of recovery and the Court's commitment to providing intensive, structured support to families navigating complex needs. Even in cases where completion is not achieved, the program offers meaningful opportunities for growth, accountability, and healing.

The court team includes the bench, treatment court coordinator, service providers, caseworkers, court staff, and a CASA or Guardian ad Litem who advocates for the best interests of the children. Together, this team delivers comprehensive and compassionate support to meet the unique needs of each family. In December 2025, the Family Dependency Treatment Court earned recertification from the Ohio Supreme Court's Commission on Specialized Dockets, reaffirming its commitment to best practices and effective outcomes. The Ohio Supreme Court recognizes Family Dependency Treatment Courts as collaborative, family-focused programs that promote faster, safer reunification. Delaware County's Family Dependency Treatment Court remains dedicated to helping parents achieve sobriety, stability, and long-term success for themselves and their children.

Probation Department

The Court serves higher criminogenic risk youth through the probation department. Youth served on probation are adjudicated delinquent or unruly and determined to be moderate or high-risk on the OYAS risk assessment. The youth is ordered on probation by the Magistrate or Judge overseeing the case. While probation is designed to serve moderate and high-risk youth, low risk youth may also be ordered to the probation program by the Judge or Magistrate at their discretion.

Youth on probation meet with their probation officer based upon their risk level; high-risk youth meet weekly with a probation officer and moderate-risk youth meet twice monthly with their probation officer. The goal of probation is to reduce the youth's criminogenic risk and create

behavior change, using various evidence-based practices, while balancing keeping youth in their community and protecting the community.

While on probation, a case plan is developed by the probation officer and the youth based on the results of the OYAS, with emphasis placed on addressing the highest risk factors within each domain as identified. Intervention services are delivered in settings such as the youth's home, probation office, and the community. Some of the services provided by probation may include prosocial groups, peer support groups, and referrals to community-based support.

Probation officers manage caseloads of about 10 to 15 youth. The caseload sizes are smaller than other programs because the youth are at higher risk, therefore they need interventions more frequently. During probation appointments, staff use evidence-based practices such as Carey Guides, Forward Thinking Journals, Motivational Interviewing, and the EPICS model. Role-playing exercises are incorporated to help youth practice skills and decision-making. The length of time that youth are on probation varies by their risk level and their progress on their case plan. Moderate-risk youth are typically on probation for four to six months, while high-risk youth are on probation for six to twelve months.

Once a youth is determined to finish their court orders as well as their case plan, the case is recommended for successful termination. Cases involving a victim are set for a formal hearing in accordance with Marsy's law to allow the victim to have a voice in determining the closure of the case. In 2025, the probation department served 45 general youth. Of the youth who were terminated from probation, 85% of them were terminated successfully. The juvenile sex offender probation officer served 18 youth in 2025.

Family Advocate Program

The Family Advocate program has been serving Delaware County for over 40 years, offering family-directed interventions for at-risk youth and families with multiple needs. The program focuses on understanding family dynamics through direct observation in natural settings, which helps identify strengths, challenges, and opportunities for growth.

Staff provide services grounded in Functional Family Therapy (FFT), which encourages families to view problems from a broader perspective, reduce blame, and take shared responsibility for resolving issues. FFT also teaches families essential skills to improve functioning and reduce recidivism or out-of-home placements.

Two key assessments, the Family Environmental Scale (FES) and the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale (FACES IV), help measure the social (e.g. conflict) and environmental aspects of the family dynamic. These tools guide goal setting by identifying areas for improvement, such as family cohesion, communication, and family satisfaction. Assessment data is collected during the engagement phase (typically within the first two sessions) and again at termination to measure self-reported progress.

Advocates maintain weekly contact with families to set and monitor individualized goals, with service duration typically ranging from 3 to 12 months, depending on each family's needs. The program's core interventions and delivery methods, including FFT, Motivational Interviewing, and PATHS, have remained consistent. Services are designed to be strength-based and trauma informed.

In 2025, the program served 49 families, with each family receiving tailored support to develop and work on specific goals. The average number of direct service hours per youth/family was 15.11 hours. Progress is tracked through ongoing case notes and highlighted at termination. The program's macro goal is family preservation, specifically, the prevention of out-of-home placements.

Safe Harbor Programming

The Safe Harbor coordinator received 20 referrals for youth in 2025. Seven cases were confirmed human trafficking situations, 5 were determined not to be human trafficking situations, and the remaining 8 cases were youth engaged in risky behaviors that increased their vulnerability for trafficking exploitation. Youth who experienced human trafficking received direct service referrals to meet their needs. Youth that engaged in risky behaviors were connected to 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.

In 2025, the Delaware County Juvenile Court led the creation of the Delaware County Juvenile Safe Harbor Protocol, and the formation of a new multidisciplinary team in Delaware County to address sex trafficking in youth. The team was created to assist in identifying and serving survivors and to ensure compliance with Ohio's Safe Harbor laws. The Safe Harbor law establishes access to juvenile justice diversionary programming for youth charged with an offense related to their trafficking victimization. The protocol illustrates how this programming is implemented in the juvenile justice system, explaining both the referral process and the nature of the programming available.

This protocol was developed so that partner agencies understand their role and responsibility to each other when they encounter a juvenile sex trafficking situation. It also provides community partners and practitioners who are not experts in trafficking with a procedure for reporting suspected sex trafficking involving a minor. The team will focus on increasing the identification of potential victims, assessing the situation, and ensuring that juvenile victims of trafficking receive individualized support.

The Safe Harbor coordinator provided technical support to juvenile courts in the state and presented 12 human trafficking training sessions for professional development trainings and conferences. Additionally, the Safe Harbor Coordinator served as the Delaware County Juvenile

Court's representative for the Attorney General's Human Trafficking Commission and the Governor's Human Trafficking Task Force.

Fiscal Department

In 2025, the Court hired and onboarded ten new employees across the probation, clerical, family advocate, CARE Center, and probate departments. Of these, one was a newly created magistrate position in response to the increased probate filings. During 2025, several positions were modified to fit staffing and community needs. The position of chief probation officer was not filled, but rather the director of court services was promoted into this role. Also, the position of Probation Assistant/Community Service was modified to incorporate two previously existing roles.

The year ended with one unfilled position, that of a social worker/family advocate. Ongoing assessment of all programs and caseloads will determine if additional positions are needed and/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 fees and fines collected.

General Fund

At the beginning of the 2025 fiscal year, the court received approval for appropriations from the county, including the carryforward requested from 2024, for an available budget of \$6,071,931.15. The total general fund expenses totaled \$5,291,902.78. This total does not include the requested carryforward of \$89,042.50 from FY2025 to FY2026. These carryover expenses include youth placement costs, guardianship attorney fees, and software licenses. With the inclusion of the FY2026 carryover requests, the court returned \$673,265.87 to the county general fund. This return is due primarily to unfilled positions that are held on the general fund and the benefits that are associated with those salary costs. Additionally, the increased use of grant funding to support the time and effort of staff reduced the expenses to the general fund.

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 2025 was \$921,898.67; this program runs from July 1 to June 30. The amount noted above was for the timeframe of July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025. This amount increased by \$296,249.97 compared to 2024 funding, primarily due to the decreased usage of non-public safety beds in detention facilities. Also, in FY2025, the juvenile court received a two year Competitive

RECLAIM award totaling \$150,000 to create a Restorative Justice program operating out of the Assessment Center. The DYS RECLAIM grant funded eight court programs in 2025, including a Restitution Work program which allows youth to complete community service in exchange for restitution payments. This allows youth who may otherwise struggle to complete restitution (due to their age, transportation availability, or socioeconomic status) to complete their program terms and make whole the victims of their offense. At the close of 2025, the DYS grant supported 9.4 FTE across all programs and had distributed \$3,933.43 of restitution (equivalent to 328 hours of community service work).

The other large source of outside funding is in relation to the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program. This program is supported by the Ohio Attorney General's Office and Union County, as this program operates in both Delaware and Union Counties. The CASA program supports a portion of five full-time 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 2025, the CASA program was required to provide \$26,124.03 in in-kind volunteer hours (1742 hours). During the project period, the volunteers provided 6212.54 hours and travelled 55,188.98 miles, totaling an in-kind match of \$122,162.31, more than 4.6 times the required amount. 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 \$111,253.04 in salary support for the two FTEs serving cases originating from that court. The Delaware County Probate/Juvenile Court's General Fund supported the remaining salary and benefits of the other FTEs.

Fees and Fines Collection/Disbursement/Refunds

Fees and fines are collected by both Juvenile and Probate Courts. These revenue rates are set by local rules and Ohio Revised Code. At the close of each month, these revenues are reallocated as prescribed. In calendar year 2025, \$305,293.85 funds were collected, as well as \$17,185.57 in restitution. Of the non-restitution funds collected, \$254,903.46 were distributed to the court general funds or related court programs, including \$2,050.00 to the Public Defender's Office and \$17,850 to the Domestic Violence Fund. Additionally, \$36,416.00 was transferred to the State of Ohio Treasurer as required. The remaining balance of \$13,974.39 was held on deposit on cases until the case completion. Refunds are issued to filers upon case closure, though probate refunds are limited to balances at or above \$25. Any balance below this threshold is transferred to the Indigent Guardianship Fund held by the Probate Court. In the calendar year of 2025, the Fiscal Department processed 237 refunds totaling \$17,116.18 and transferred \$20,446.18 to the Indigent Guardianship fund. This fund assists with guardianship service costs provided by local attorneys and social workers.

Expenses

All Budget Lines

Across all funding codes (not including the fees/fines reconciliation or refunds), the total expense for 2025 was \$6,538,492.58. This is an increase of 3.3% from 2024 or \$210,281.75. A majority of this increase (\$108,073.31) is related to salary and related benefits. As in previous years, expenses for Delaware County Probate/Juvenile Court are primarily salaries and benefits. The court ended 2025 with 53 full-time and 1 part-time employees on payroll and numerous volunteers. Of the total expense, salary and the associated benefits accounted for 81.3%, or \$5,316,823.67. The remaining expenses were used for supply and service purchases. The greatest non-salary related expense is that for youth placement, totaling \$601,574.12. This cost includes the annual detention cost to the Central Ohio Youth Center, respite services, and contributions to Family and Child First Council. Other expense groups are noted below:

Budget Line	2025 total	Includes
Guardianship Attorney Fees	\$164,170.20	Support to Guardianship Service Board/ Attorney Guardians
Software	\$26,231.48	Case Management Program/SmartBench/Zoom Licenses
Professional Services	\$73,817.46	Client Evaluations, Interpreter Services, Probate Help Desk
Attorney Fees - Other	\$46,827.07	Out of County Court Fees/CASA Attorneys
Probation Services	\$49,594.42	GPS/Drug Screens/Work Restitution Program/Incentives
Office Services	\$22,358.03	Cell Phones/Copiers/Printing
Training/Membership/Travel	\$35,558.51	
Vehicle Expense	\$15,142.80	Lease agreement – county-wide contract
Restitution	\$17,035.68	Pass through account – directly paid by youth to victims
Mileage Reimbursement	\$7,258.65	In-Town travel - Mediators/School Liaisons/Probate Investigators
HR Services	\$2,111.40	Backgrounds Checks/Pre-Employment Drug Screens

General Fund

For the calendar year of 2025, the total expenses in the general funds totaled \$5,291,902.78 – this is an increase of \$21,138.92 from 2024 or 0.4%. Between delay in filling positions from turnover and staffing re-organization, salary and benefit lines were reduced in 2025. However, a probation kitchenette, conference room updates, and a probate office remodel added \$33,355.34 to the supply expense total. Additionally, \$35,000 was returned to the Mental Health Board in 2025, due to a duplicate payment for the Treatment Court allocation.

General Fund	2024	2025	Difference	Change %
Salaries	\$3,056,162.10	\$2,988,650.86	(\$67,511.24)	(2.21%)
Benefits	\$1,180,736.10	\$1,156,964.23	(\$23,771.87)	(2.01%)
Supplies	\$36,344.70	\$83,271.49	\$46,926.79	129.12%
Services	\$997,520.96	\$1,063,016.20	\$65,495.24	6.57%
Total	\$5,270,763.86	\$5,291,902.78	\$21,138.92	0.40%