



**COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF UNION COUNTY, OHIO
PROBATE & JUVENILE DIVISION**

2021 Annual Report

HON. RICK RODGER, JUDGE

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From the Desk of Judge Rick Rodger

To the Citizens of Union County, Ohio:

When I started practicing law more than 30 years ago, I never envisioned that I would serve this wonderful county as an Assistant Prosecuting Attorney for about 29 years and certainly never believed that I would serve as Judge of the Union County Court of Common Pleas, Probate and Juvenile Division. I am humbled for the opportunity to continue serving Union County as Judge.

Since coming into office on February 9, 2021, the Court has continued to be very busy. When I started, we were in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, which altered how we conducted the business of the Court, including hearings. Many of our hearings were through video teleconferencing. As we became familiar with the use of video teleconferencing, it is clear that the Court will continue to use this technology well into the future. We worked diligently to improve the sound quality within our Courtrooms by updating and adding additional audio recording equipment.

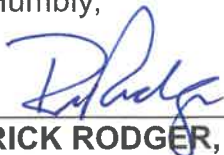
Since coming into office, my wonderful staff and I have been committed to reviewing the numerous internal processes and practices of the Court to improve efficiency and service to the public. We obtained a grant to permit law enforcement to submit their traffic citations electronically. The Ohio State Highway Patrol was the first law enforcement agency to complete this process with our Court. We secured grant funding so that Union County Sheriff, Marysville Police Department, Richwood Police Department and Plain City Police Department could do the same. We hope the updated process will be complete in 2022. We appreciate the support of our law enforcement community and our many community partners.

In 2021, we became one of the few juvenile courts in the United States to complete the Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) Mapping process. This process brings key local stakeholders together to develop how people with mental health conditions and substance abuse disorders come into contact the juvenile justice system and the services designed to help them. We were pleased to work with Dr. Phil Atkins and the Union County Mental Health and Recovery Board team, through their Mosaic Project, to complete this important work. With this process, the Court remains committed to better serving the people of Union County.

I would be remiss if I did not let you know how much I appreciate my staff, who have been very gracious and patient with me. Since I came into the office, they worked with me closely as I learned every process, asked questions and joined me in creating new ways for the Court to move forward and serve. I could not do what my job as Judge without them and remain very grateful for their assistance and their support as we move forward as a team to serve the children and families of Union County, Ohio.

I appreciate the people of Union County, Ohio who have entrusted me with this awesome opportunity to serve you, as Judge, within this wonderful County.

Humbly,



RICK RODGER, JUDGE
UNION COUNTY COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
PROBATE AND JUVENILE DIVISION

Hon. Rick Rodger, Judge

Judge Rick Rodger grew up on a farm in the State of Montana. After graduating high school, Judge Rodger attended Brigham Young University in Utah where he graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Justice Administration. After college, he attended Capital University Law School and graduated in 1988.

In 1988, Judge Rodger began working for a local law firm and eventually became a partner in that firm. In 1990, Judge Rodger moved to Marysville, Ohio. In 1992, Judge Rodger joined the Union County Prosecuting Attorney's Office and remained with that office through 2000. Between 2001 and 2005, Judge Rodger served as an Assistant Prosecutor for Hardin County, Ohio. In 2005, Judge Rodger became an Assistant Prosecuting Attorney for Union County once again and remained in that position until 2021. On November 3, 2021, Judge Rodger was elected to serve as Probate and Juvenile Judge of the Union County Court of Common Pleas Court. He began his term as Judge on February 9, 2021.

Judge Rodger has been married to his wife, Sharon, for 39 years and they have two sons; both of whom graduated from Marysville High School and have gone on to receive further education. Judge Rodger also has a wonderful daughter-in-law who is pursuing her master's degree in education.

Employees of the Probate and Juvenile Court

HON. RICK RODGER, JUDGE AND EX-OFFICIO CLERK

MAGISTRATES

Sharon Robinson-Walls,
Chief Magistrate
Louis P. Endres, III, Magistrate
Adam R. Rinehart,
Magistrate/Court Administrator
Victoria L. Stone-Moledor,
Magistrate/Staff Attorney

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Julie Harvey,
Administrative Assistant to the Judge
Nicole Gardner, Chief Financial Officer
Sue Chongson, Financial Officer

CASA PROGRAM OF DELAWARE AND UNION COUNTIES

Tammy Matias, Executive Director
Melanie Kempton,
Assistant CASA Coordinator
Meagen Belcher, Program Assistant

COMMUNITY CONTROL AND PROBATION DEPARTMENT

Jennifer N. Griffith,
Chief Probation Officer/Court Administrator
Joshua Levingston,
Senior Probation Officer
Lindsey Keller, Probation Officer
Abby Sullivan, Probation Officer

FAMILY AND JUVENILE TREATMENT COURTS

Lauren Levingston, LSW, Coordinator
Zachary Wentink, Coordinator
Clara Coffey,
Case Manager/Probation Officer

JUVENILE DIVISION DEPUTY CLERKS OF COURT

Leigh Ann Moots, Chief Deputy Clerk
Pamela O'Brien, Deputy Clerk
Jackie Dillahunt, Deputy Clerk
Meghan Howard, Deputy Clerk
Christy Jackson, Deputy Clerk
Lorli Patterson, Deputy Clerk
Jerika Risner, Deputy Clerk
Christine Schalip, Deputy Clerk
Pam Vance, Deputy Clerk

PROBATE DIVISION DEPUTY CLERKS OF COURT

Jennifer La Fayette, Chief Deputy Clerk
Sarah Johnson, Probate Clerk
Aaron Orr, Probate Clerk

SERVICES PROVIDED PURSUANT TO CONTRACT

Daniel L. Davis, Ph.D., Board Certified Forensic Psychologist
Nicole R. McDonald, Esq., Mediator
Shannon Rust, Esq., and **Stephanie Coe, Esq.**, CASA Staff Attorneys
Jon Kleiber and **Kim Zacharias**, Probate Court Investigators
Adoption Circle, Probate Court Adoption Assessor

History of the Probate & Juvenile Courts

Courtesy of **Stephen W. Badenhop**, Union County Record Center & Archives Coordinator

Probate Court



Union County's first courthouse was a tavern located in the Village of Milford Center, where county business was temporarily conducted from 1820 to 1821. It was moved to the Union County Fairgrounds in the late 1800s but removed in 1940, due to decay.

1852. Prior to 1852, probate matters in Union County were heard and decided by a judge of the Union County Common Pleas Court.

As a result of a 1912 constitutional amendment, voters could decide by referendum to combine the probate court with the court of common pleas, which voters declined to approve in Union County.

Juvenile Court

The origins of the juvenile court system trace back to the reform spirit of the Progressive Era. Prior to the establishment of the juvenile court system, juvenile offenders were tried like adults and imprisoned with them.

On April 25, 1904, the Ohio General Assembly passed an act to "regulate the treatment and control of dependent, neglected and delinquent children" through the establishment of a juvenile court. The law focused on the reformation and rehabilitation of minors, rather than punishment and applied only to children less than 16 years old. The law provided for juvenile probation officers and prohibited sending children under the age of twelve to jail, while allowing those children twelve to sixteen years of age to be sentenced to jail, industrial schools, other state institutions or into the homes of responsible individuals, and decreed those children sentenced to jail could not be confined with adult prisoners. Jurisdiction was

Probate courts existed in the Northwest Territory prior to Ohio's statehood, with authority in probate, testamentary and guardianship cases. In 1802, Ohio's first constitution abolished separate probate courts and vested that jurisdiction with the common pleas courts.

Union County was created by the Ohio General Assembly in 1820 by uniting portions of Delaware, Franklin, Madison and Logan counties, as well as a portion of territory controlled by indigenous peoples pursuant to the 1795 Treaty of Green Ville (colloquially, the "Greenville Treaty.")

Separate probate courts reappeared in 1851, when Ohio drafted a new constitution, giving probate court jurisdiction to grant marriage licenses and control land sales by appointed executors, administrators, and guardians. The Union County Probate Court was established in



In 1822, the county operations moved to Marysville. The second courthouse (1822-1838) was a 20' x 40' log structure with a jail situated behind.

Illustration by E. Gene Sellers (1929-2015).

originally given to the court of common pleas or the probate court.

In 1906, the juvenile court act was extensively amended. The revised law extended the court's jurisdiction to punish any person or parent responsible for the delinquency or dependency of any child, while also raising the age of a minor to seventeen years. The law also provided that the probate court judge in all counties, except those otherwise provided for, serve as ex-officio judge of the juvenile court.

By the approval of voters, the juvenile court can be placed under the jurisdiction of an independent juvenile court, or as a division of either the common pleas, probate or domestic relations courts. In Union County, the juvenile court has been under the jurisdiction of the probate court judge since the juvenile court was established in 1906. Each was a separate court until the juvenile court was combined with the probate court pursuant to an act passed on April 29, 1937, which reorganized and recodified the existing juvenile laws. With the passage of the Modern Courts Amendment to the Ohio Constitution in May 1968, Ohio's Probate Courts became divisions of the Courts of Common Pleas.



The third courthouse (1838-1883).

Union County Probate & Juvenile Court Judges

Hon. Thomas Brown
(1852-1855 and 1859-1861)*

Hon. James M. Turner
(1855-1859)

Hon. James R. Smith
(1861-1870)

Hon. John B. Coats
(1870-1888)

Hon. Leonidas Piper
(1888-1894)

Hon. James S. McCampbell
(1894-1900)

Hon. John M. Brodrick
(1900-1906)

Hon. Dudley E. Thornton
(1906 – 1913)

Hon. Edward W. Porter
(1913 – 1921)

Hon. William H. Husted
(1921 – 1932)

Hon. Carrie Wood Hornbeck
(1932 – 1933)*

Hon. L. W. Hazen
(1933 – 1941)

Hon. John W. Dailey, Sr.
(1941 – 1955)

Hon. Luther L. Liggett
(1955 – 1960)

Hon. Robert F. Allen
(1960 – 1979)

Hon. Gary F. McKinley
(1979 – 2003)**

Hon. Charlotte Coleman Eufinger
(2003 – 2021)

Hon. Rick Rodger
(2021 –)

* Judge Turner unexpectedly passed away December 26, 1859. Judge Brown was appointed to fill the office and served until the election of Judge James R. Smith in 1861. Judge Brown was not admitted to the bar until 1846.

** Ms. Hornbeck, Chief Deputy Clerk of the Probate Court from 1916 to 1946, was nominated by the Union County Commissioners and appointed by Governor George White to serve the unexpired term of Judge Husted, who unexpectedly passed away on August 31, 1932.

*** Judge McKinley was the longest-serving judge in the history of the Court; he served 24 years before he retired February 8, 2003.

Probate Division

The Probate Division of the Court of Common Pleas assists citizens to navigate many aspects of their lives, from forging new families through the process of adoption, to issuing Marriage Licenses, to the filing and settling of Estates at the end of life. The Probate Court primarily sees the following types of cases.

Adoptions. Most adoptions are of a minor child, though the law permits adoption of adults in specific circumstances. In 2020, the Supreme Court of Ohio held in *In re Adoption of Y.E.F.*, 163 Ohio St.3d 521, 2020-Ohio-6785, 171 N.E.3d 302, that indigent fathers who do not consent to the adoption are entitled to representation by an attorney appointed by the Court and provided by the Ohio Public Defender. The Probate Court also considered petitions from adopting parents who wish to be pre-approved for adoption. If the adopting parents are not working with an adoption agency who provides a home study, the Court will appoint the Court's contracted adoption assessor to complete the home study.

Changes of Name. For many reasons, Ohioans choose to change their legal name to solidify their identity. A petition can be filed by an adult to change their own name, or by a parent or custodian to change the name of a minor.

Civil Actions. Adversarial lawsuits filed in the Probate Court include the following actions: to contest the validity or construction of a will (which, upon demand, may be tried by a jury); citations for the concealment of assets or to produce an original will; to continue or withdraw life-sustaining medical treatment; presumption of death of a missing person; and petitions to order treatment for persons suffering from the effects of alcohol or other drug abuse.

Union County Probate Court					
Filing Trends (2017-2021)					
Incoming Cases	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Adoptions	33	18	31	16	15
Changes of Name	25	22	47	32	30
Civil Actions	1	1	5	1	4
Civil Commitment/ Mental Illness	2	0	0	0	0
Conservatorships	1	1	0	0	0
Delayed Registrations & Corrections of Birth Record	8	7	7	5	1
Decedent's Estates	171	157	178	179	199
Guardianships (Adult)	28	18	14	18	17
Guardianships (Minors)	5	9	7	7	3
Minor's Settlement	2	5	4	3	2
Testamentary Trusts	1	2	3	1	4
Wrongful Death	2	1	0	0	0
Other, Miscellaneous	1	2	2	5	7
Total Incoming Cases	277	240	296	262	276
Total Matters Closed	263	227	239	285	209
Matters Pending at Close of Year	367	385	426	402	481
Marriage License Applications	309	317	317	323	364

Civil Commitments. The Probate Court exercises exclusive jurisdiction to order civil commitment, involuntary hospitalization of mentally ill persons or involuntary outpatient treatment for those who can reasonably benefit from recommended treatment. These actions are filed when the allegedly mentally ill person refuses to or cannot voluntarily consent and comply with necessary treatment.

Delayed Registrations and Corrections of Birth Records. Although uncommon today, the parents or guardians a child whose birth is not otherwise registered immediately with the Ohio Department of Health's (ODH) Bureau of Vital Statistics can petition the Probate Court to order the registration and creation of a birth certificate. In December 2020, the United States District Court held (*Ray v. McCloud*, 507 F. Supp. 3d 925 (S.D.Ohio 2020)) that an ODH policy that prohibited Ohioans from changing the sex

(gender marker) reported on their birth certificate was a violation of several federally protected constitutional rights. At the time, Ohio was one of only three remaining states that prohibited such modification on birth certificates. Ohioans can now petition the Probate Court to order the ODH to change their gender as reported on their birth certificate, and this Court created forms to facilitate that process in accord with the law.

Decedent's Estates. The Court oversees the estates of persons who die owning property that must be distributed either according to their validly executed will or, if the owner died without a will, in accord with the laws of descent and distribution. The Probate Court appoints one or more fiduciaries to conduct the administration of the estate.

Guardianship of Adults. If an adult person is "so mentally impaired, as a result of a mental or physical illness or disability, as a result of intellectual disability, or as a result of chronic substance abuse, that the person is incapable of taking proper care of the person's self or property [...]," the Probate Court will consider an application to appoint a guardian for that person. See R.C. 2111.11(D)(1). A guardian has many important and mandatory duties, including the completion of education provided by the Supreme Court of Ohio (both upon appointment and annually each year thereafter), and timely

file accurate, annual accountings regarding the ward's assets. Guardians are strictly accountable to the Court in its role as the superior guardian of all wards.

Guardianship of Children. A guardianship of the minor's person could be granted if the child's parents are deceased, unable or unwilling to provide care and guidance for the ward, or if the minor's best interest will be promoted through a guardianship. A guardianship of the minor's estate could be granted when the child has obtained property valued at more than \$25,000 and Probate Court oversight of the financial administration of those assets is required. A guardianship of both the minor's person and the minor's estate may be granted if circumstances require.

Settlement of Claims for Personal Injuries (Incompetent Adults and Minors). Probate Court approval is required for any settlement of claims for personal injuries to an incompetent adult under guardianship or a minor child. Parents and guardians may file suit on behalf of the ward or child and may negotiate proposed settlements, however only the Probate Court can approve the actual settlement, grant authority to execute releases and to receive proceeds for the estates of the incompetent adult or the minor child.

Historical Records of the Probate Court

Union County Probate Court historical and closed records are available for review at the Union County Records Center and Archives (128 S. Main St., Marysville). Records may be viewed with the assistance of an archivist. Many historical records have been microfilmed and digitally indexed.

A computer terminal is available for public use at both the Union County Records Center and the Union County Recorder's Office (233 W. Sixth St.).

The computerized, searchable index references all Probate matters from 1820 through May 2019. Beginning June 1, 2019, the Probate Court's public dockets and records can be accessed online through the Union County Clerk of Court's website.

The following records are also available: Birth and Death Records from 1867 to 1909; Marriage Records from 1820 to present (digitally, May 28, 1996 and after); and Delayed Registration and Correction of Birth records from 1941 to the present. Mental illness and intellectual disability cases are confidential. Adoption records are confidential; however, limited access may be granted according to the controlling provisions of the Ohio Revised Code.

Open matters are held in the Probate Clerk's Office and may be viewed with the assistance of a deputy clerk. Customers are advised to call ahead to the Probate Court at (937) 645-3029 Ext. 3441 to inquire about the location and availability of a particular file. Copies are available for a fee.

Juvenile Division

The jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court includes:

Unruly Children – children who are truant or will not submit to the reasonable control of their parents, guardians, custodians, or teachers, by reason of being wayward or habitually disobedient.

Delinquent Children – children who violate any federal, state or local law or ordinance that would be an offense if committed by an adult; violate a lawful order of the court; and attempt or complete acts forbidden to those less than 18 years of age. Children who are adjudicated of felony-level offenses may be committed to serve a term in an Ohio Department of Youth Services Juvenile Correctional Facility (JCF) or, alternatively, a Community Corrections Facility (CCF) to receive targeted treatment.

Abused Children – includes children whose adult caregiver has abused the child or placed the child in danger of abuse, which includes sexual, physical, or mental abuse, and includes infants who test positive at birth for illicit drugs.

Neglected Children – includes children whose adult caregiver has abandoned the child, refuses to provide proper or necessary subsistence, education, medical or surgical care or treatment, or other care necessary for the child’s physical or mental health, morals, or well-being, or whose faults result in a lack of parental adequate care.

Dependent Children – includes children who are dependent upon the state for their care because of homelessness, lack of parental adequate care, or circumstances of the child’s condition or environment that warrant the state to assume the child’s guardianship.

Union County Juvenile Court					
Filing Trends (2017-2021)					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Delinquency	270	152	148	110	135
Individual Youth Adjudicated of a Felony*	17	20	18	8	18
Commitment to ODYS JCF**	0	2	1	0	1
Placement in ODYS CCF***	1	2	3	3	2
Unruly	50	48	45	29	43
Juvenile Traffic	260	212	235	255	289
Abuse/Neglect/Dependency	41	47	76	63	35
Permanent Custody	5	2	0	0	5
Custody/Visitation	73	65	77	71	60
Parentage	1	4	1	0	0
Child Support Enforcement/Modification	266	455	423	340	283
UIFSA	5	2	0	5	0
Adult Criminal	8	13	5	7	28
Other	29	31	22	20	21
All New Matters Filed	1,008	1,051	1,032	901	899
Matters Terminated	1,003	1,086	1,014	841	1,018

*As reported to Ohio Department of Youth Services per the Fiscal Year (July 1 to June 30).

**Committed to serve a term in a Juvenile Correctional Facility.

***Ordered to serve a term in the Ohio Department of Youth Services Community Corrections Facility.

Juvenile Traffic Offenders – children who violate a federal, state or local traffic laws, other than parking violations. In June 2020, the Court instituted a Juvenile Traffic Violations Bureau to allow minors to waive and admit to certain traffic offenses; 31 cases in 2020 and 80 cases in 2021 were adjudicated through the Bureau.

Custody – determination of parental rights and responsibilities to children of unwed parents.

Child Support – matters regarding the establishment, modification or enforcement of Court or Child Support Agency administrative orders for the financial support of children.

Adult (Criminal) – includes matters in which adults are charged with misdemeanor violations of nonsupport or contributing to nonsupport of dependents; parental educational neglect; interference with custody; and contributing to the unruliness or delinquency of a child.

Other – includes orders of protection against a juvenile and petitions of minor child (17) to marry.

Juvenile Probation Department

The officers of the Juvenile Probation Department are dedicated to improve the lives of youth under the jurisdiction of the Court due to delinquent or unruly behavior.

Through the Probation Department, the Court utilizes a proactive approach to support family enrichment, by invoking various resources to strengthen parent and child relationships to promote unity and family stability. Probation officers support a youth's academic growth by facilitating communication and interaction between schools and families. Youth are also required to engage in tasks such as community service and writing meaningful apology letters that hold them accountable for their past actions. Probation officers assist in the development of family-managed responsibility through structured rewards and consequences to promote healthy future decision-making.

Annually, the Ohio Department of Youth Services (DYS) provides the Union County Juvenile Court with supplemental funding to develop and provide an array of local, community-based treatment, intervention, diversion and prevention programs to address and serve the individual needs of each juvenile offender or youth at risk of offending. The direct funding is intended to further Ohio's goal to divert or steer youth away from a path that could lead to placement in Ohio Department of Youth Services (DYS) institutions.

The Union County Juvenile Court has prioritized the use of DYS funding to build a highly trained staff of probation officers who can provide individualized interventions to youth of all risk levels. Union County's Juvenile Probation Officers approach all youth with a strength-based, family-centered mindset, bolstered by

ongoing training in multiple disciplines, including motivational interviewing and the targeted use of evidence-based interventions. The primary goal is to guide youth to lasting behavioral change.

Probation officers primarily work with youth in their own home and involve the youth's parents or guardians in most interactions, with few exceptions. A youth's term of probation varies depending on the youth's compliance with court orders, identified risk level and the severity of their offense. A youth's case is successfully terminated after probation case plan goals and court orders are completed.

The probation officers begin immediately to work closely with the youth and family to identify their strengths and needs. All probation officers are appropriately trained to perform various screenings and assessments. As the result of many years of juvenile justice system evidence, today it is a well-settled fact that lower risk youth are best served by the community-based interventions, while outcomes for higher risk youth are better if they engage in more intensive programs.

Juvenile Court Probation Department					
Five Year Trend (2017-2021)					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Youth on Community Control/Probation*					
Continuing from preceding year	111	98	52	56	29
New Youth	64	84	49	22	56
Total Supervisions	175	182	101	78	85
Successful Completions	57	88	59	52	29
Unsuccessful Completions	19	19	7	5	2
Neutral Completions	0	0	2	4	3
Total Completions	76	107	67	61	34

Specialized Assessments*,**	14	15	14	13	8
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Specialized Interventions					
Youth in CBI Group***			5	4	6
Youth in FFT-Informed Services (OhioGuidestone)*			18	35	31
Parents in The Parent Project®***	14	20	6	0	0

*Data reported to Ohio Department of Youth Services for State Fiscal Year (July 1 to June 30).

**Specialized Assessments: i.e. psychological assessments; competency assessments; specialized offenses assessments.

*** Data reported for calendar year.

Ohio Youth Assessment System (OYAS) Assessments

All youth adjudicated of an unruly or delinquency offense receive an Ohio Youth Assessment System (OYAS) assessment, which determines the youth's likelihood of recidivating in seven (7) targeted criminogenic need areas. The OYAS risk-need level assessment is critical to form the department's response to the youth's individualized needs, and follow-up screenings are periodically conducted to measure progress and further guide the use of appropriate interventions. Youth eligible to participate in the Court's Diversion Accountability Program are screened with the Ohio Youth Assessment System-Diversion (OYAS-DIV) tool.

The probation officers also screen the youth for exposure to adverse childhood experiences (ACES) and trauma in furtherance of the Court's long-standing commitment to provide trauma-informed services and responses.

The Carey Guides for Youth

To reinforce behavioral change, Union County Juvenile Probation Officers are trained and utilize the long-term case management strategies set forth in The Carey Guides, an intervention program for moderate to high-risk youth. Probation officers guide the youth to understand the personal and environmental factors underlying their offending behavior and teach the youth skills to achieve lasting behavioral changes.

Brief Intervention Tools for Youth

The Probation Officers are also trained to use Brief Intervention Tools (BITS) to address key skill deficits for moderate to high-risk youth in short, structured interventions. Youth learn a variety of skills including, but not limited to: prosocial decision making, overcoming automatic responses and thinking traps, problem solving, and examining unhealthy relationships.

Cognitive-Behavioral Interventions Group for Youth

Many moderate to high-risk youths can also participate in the Cognitive-Behavioral Interventions - Core Youth (CBI-CY), created by the University of Cincinnati and initially offered by the probation department began offering the group in 2019. CBI participants meet twice per

week for twenty-three weeks in a group setting that provides a thorough intervention to broadly target all criminogenic needs in moderate to high-risk youth.

The probation officers are trained to lead the group with a cognitive-behavioral approach to manage risk factors in a way that is developmentally appropriate for youth. CBI places heavy emphasis on skill building activities to assist with cognitive, social, emotional, and coping skill development. The probation department also developed and provides a modified and shortened version of CBI-CY. That program is carefully targeted to deliver benefits of the curriculum for low-risk youth who are not appropriate to participate in the standard CBI-CY group program.

In 2020, CBI moved to a virtual platform to maintain the program and continue to benefit enrolled youth during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Parent Project® Group for Parents

Families with identified parenting needs are referred to **The Parent Project®**, taught by specially trained staff members who received initial training in 2013, funded by an ODYS grant. The Parent Project® is a 40-hour clinical group and parenting course for the families of delinquent and unruly children under the jurisdiction of this Court.

The Parent Project® is designed to empower parents to increase the effectiveness of their parental monitoring and supervision skills, as well as provide families with appropriate intervention strategies to maintain youth within their homes. Parents learn to calmly address problematic behavior, implement specific sanctions for unwanted behaviors, reward desired behavior and other skills to assist in decreasing negative behaviors that contributed to their child's delinquent or unruly behaviors.

The classes are held one evening per week for 12 weeks. Curriculum materials and meals are provided by Families Matter, a non-profit organization that supports local families and the mission of the Union County Juvenile Court to strengthen and improve the lives of children under the jurisdiction of the Court. Although initially, many parents are skeptical that the program will benefit them and their families, upon completion, the most conclude the program with a deep appreciation for the positive impact

their new, learned parenting skills have benefitted their child.

Seven parents were enrolled in The Parent Project® during 2020 but were unable to complete the program due to the challenges of COVID-19. In 2021, no classes were held due to the ongoing pandemic.

OhioGuidestone FFT-Informed Services for Youth and Families

In 2018, the Union County Juvenile Court secured an ODYS Competitive RECLAIM Grant in the amount of \$300,000 for use in Fiscal Years 2019, 2020 and 2021 to employ OhioGuidestone, an Ohio behavioral health agency, to provide Functional Family Therapy (FFT) and psychiatric services (as necessary).

FFT is an evidence-based, strength-based, tri-phasic family therapy model designed to help youth and their families who struggle with acting-out behaviors and relational issues and provides skills to reduce recidivism. The outcomes of the program result in a decrease of acting-out behaviors and an increase in relational functioning for the family and the larger community involved with the family.

The target population for FFT are both males and females, minority and non-minority youth, ages 13-18, who have been OYAS-assessed as moderate to high risk to reoffend or assessed as low risk but presenting with high psychosocial needs including significant family dysfunction that contributes to the youth's delinquency.

The phases of FFT include Engagement and Motivation, Behavior Change and Generalization. The goal of the engagement phase is to reduce negativity and blame, develop protective factors, explore barriers to change, implementing behavior change strategies and determining which behavior change interventions match the relational functions of

the problem behavior. The final phase of FFT involves generalizing the changes the family has made to other areas of the relational system, developing and following focused relapse prevention strategies and extending the changes by incorporating relevant community resources and family.

FFT informed services are individualized to the needs of the youth and their family. Sessions are typically one to two times each week and each session is 1-1.5 hours in duration. FFT is a short-term model with sessions occurring over the course of three to six months, however, services can continue if medically necessary.

OhioGuidestone's approach to clinical intervention is informed by neurobiology and applied sciences that drive clinical treatment based on symptoms and associated brain areas that delineate appropriate intervention and treatment modalities. Symptomology around brain processes involved in anxiety, depression, and anger/aggression are most common among clients, and correlated with all or most diagnoses.

OhioGuidestone therapists focus on measuring and evaluating changes in these symptom domains. Completing patient-reported outcomes monthly helps to engage the family, track progress and barriers, inform clinical interventions and individualize treatment to the needs of the client and family. Treatment progress is also measured by reviewing the treatment plan goals, as necessary. Successful completion is defined by a reduction in negative behaviors (including drug use), an increase in both parental skill development and youth mental stability, and youth medication compliance (if applicable).

Diversion Accountability Program

Juvenile delinquency or unruly behavior cases originate with the filing of a complaint by the Union County Prosecuting Attorney. Complaints are reviewed and selected if they appear appropriate for diversion based upon criteria established by the Court. Typically, youth who have no prior official or unofficial record (first-time offenders) and who are alleged to have committed status (unruly, truancy, or curfew violations) or misdemeanor-level, non-violent offenses are eligible for diversion.

The Probation Department conducts an eligibility screening of the youth and parent/guardian. If the youth is determined eligible, the youth and family must acknowledge the youth committed the offense and a Diversion Program fee must be paid. Depending on individualized programming needs, additional fees may apply. All terms, plus a deadline to complete them, will be included in the youth's Diversion Contract.

The Diversion Contract includes tasks and requirements designed to remediate the offense,

Youth in Diversion					
Trends in Alternatives to Adjudication [R.C. 2151.27] (2017-2021)					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021*
Entered Diversion	0	25	49	38	3
Successful Completion	0	20	34	36	4
Unsuccessful Completion	0	5	6	2	1

* The Court's Diversion Accountability Program was suspended February 9, 2021, but after extensive revision, re-launched in 2022.

to provide a learning opportunity for the youth and to serve as a consequence or deterrent for further illegal behavior. Terms could include: appropriate skills-building instruction; letters of apology to any victims; restitution; community service hours; a written essay on a subject related to the offense or to the youth's future goals; mental health screenings and full participation in recommended services; drug screening; and other terms that the officer believes are appropriate. Parenting skills instruction may be required for the parent/guardian.

If the youth successfully completes diversion, the Court will order the matter sealed. If the terms of the Diversion Contract are not fulfilled, the original complaint will be filed and the matter will proceed formally.

Diversion of Truancy Matters

The Union County Juvenile Court began aggressively targeting truancy in 1998 with the implementation of its Mediation Program. Mediation successfully aids many schools and families in correcting truancy issues that would otherwise have been filed in the Court. Even after changes to Ohio truancy law in 2017, the Court's mediator remains available to the school districts to mediate with families after their Absence Intervention Teams recognize that a Written Intervention Plan is likely to fail.

Mediation takes place before the matter is submitted to the Court for filing as a complaint. Like all Unruly and Delinquency matters, truancy complaints are considered for diversion if diversion is in the best interests of the child.

Truancy Complaints and Dispositions					
R.C. 2151.27(G)					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021*
Complaints Filed*	2	5	4	3	8
Entered Diversion	0	0	0	0	0
Pending***					1
Dismissed	0	0	2	2	1
Transferred for Adjudication	0	0	1	1	2
Adjudicated	2	5	1	0	4
Disposition - Probation	2	4	0	0	2
Disposition - Transferred	0	1	1	0	2

*Includes complaints alleging Habitual Truancy per R.C. 2151.022(B), Chronic Truancy per R.C. 2152.02(F)(5) and Delinquency for Violation of an Order of the Court regarding child's prior adjudication as an unruly child for habitual truancy per R.C. 2152.02(E)(2).

***Case adjudication and disposition pending at time of this report.

Complaints filed after mediation has failed typically represent the most serious of all truancy matters from each Union County school district, as well as youth who attend digital or online schools.

Commensurate with the seriousness of truancy complaints filed, the Court notes an increase of failure to send complaints (R.C.

3321.38) filed against the parents or guardians of truant children during the 2020-21 school year.

Mediation Program

The Juvenile Court’s Mediation Program has served the families and local school districts of Union County for more than 20 years. The Court estimates that hundreds of children and their families have been diverted from Juvenile Court because of the Court’s Mediation Program.

The mediator is available to serve all schools in Union County in responding to truancy and school behavior issues. Mediation also assists parents whose cases are before the Court as the result of paternity, legal custody, decision-making and visitation issues. Meeting with the mediator provides a structure for the parents to discuss their concerns and disagreements and arrive at

agreement regarding their child’s care. Some parents require the assistance of a mediator when an Abuse, Neglect or Dependency matter has come before the Court. The mediator will also assist with crafting agreements for custody and visitation. All agreements in such matters are subject to the approval of the Court.

Mediations					
Five Year Trend (2017-2021)					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Unruly – Truancy	150	18	37	31	38
Unruly – Disobedience	1	0	1	0	0
Custody – Private	1	4	10	3	10
Custody – A/N/D	0	0	0	0	0
Probate – Civil	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	0
Total Mediations	152	22	48	35	48

Treatment Courts

The Family Treatment Court (FTC) was established in November 2007 and manages adult participants whose children have open abuse, neglect or dependency cases before the Court.

The FTC functions as a collaboration of multiple systems: the court, child welfare, substance use disorder and mental health treatment providers, and community partners. No single system has the authority, capacity, resources, or skills to respond to the array of challenges faced by families affected by substance use disorders. Collaboration is required if families are to succeed.

Family Treatment Court					
Parent Participants (2017-2021)					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Parents Referred	14	15	29	21	16
Parents Admitted	6	3	11	5	4
Children of the Parents Admitted	8	20	25	15	6
Graduated	4	4	3	5	3
Terminated: Unsuccessful	3	3	0	3	2
Terminated: Neutral	0	0	2	0	0

The Juvenile Treatment Court (JTC) was established in 2010 for high-risk, high-need youth whose drug and alcohol abuse issues continue without abatement on regular probation.

A youth’s family is expected to participate in parent education and to assist the Court in monitoring and holding the youth accountable. Treatment is provided primarily by therapists from OhioGuidestone and Maryhaven, Inc. Case management, supervision of the youth and family support is provided by the treatment court coordinator and case manager.

The program goals and objectives of both treatment courts are: to establish mental health and addiction treatment services; to create a framework for the participant to live his/her life in recovery from addiction or free from substance abuse; and to provide education and supports for effective and safe parenting. For parents, the FTC seeks to safely reunify the child with the participant within the time permitted by law; and to prevent future removal due to abuse, neglect and dependency of that child or their siblings. For substance-abusing youth, the JTC seeks compliance with the terms of probation and to prevent recidivism.

Juvenile Treatment Court Juvenile Participants (2017-2021)					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Referred	24	19	12	10	12
Admitted	14	13	3	3	7
Graduated	9	6	0	1	1
Terminated: Unsuccessful	3	1	0	0	3
Terminated: Neutral	1	3	0	2	1

To successfully complete or “graduate” from treatment court, a participant must demonstrate sobriety (accumulate clean drug screens and make sober life choices); complete substance abuse treatment (at assessed levels of care); address mental health issues (current and long-term). Parent participants in FTC must also obtain stable living/housing for themselves and their children; obtain a stable income; and accomplish all the Case Plan objectives as drafted by Children’s Protective Services and approved by the Court. For youth participants in the JTC, the juveniles must complete all terms of their probation successfully, including the completion of any specialized juvenile justice intervention program.

Central Ohio Youth Center

Located at 18100 State Rt. 4, just north of Marysville, the Central Ohio Youth Center primarily serves detained youth from four counties: Union, Champaign, Madison and Delaware. In 2021, Logan County closed its local detention center and resumed use of COYC.

COYC also provides the Community Residential Center (CRC), is a 90-day program for adjudicated juvenile offenders. Within seven days of admission as a resident, the Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument (MAYSI) residential interview is completed with each resident youth, as well as a comprehensive psycho-social interview. The information obtained from the interview is utilized to develop an Individual Treatment Plan (ITP) for each resident. The ITP lists objectives to be completed to achieve each goal.

Residents are assigned a therapist upon admission. The therapist develops a case management plan and provides individual and family therapy. The frequency and duration of individual and family therapy sessions are determined on a case-by-case basis, but each CRC resident receives individual therapy at least once per week. Youth are required to satisfy their current school requirements while they reside in COYC. For those who have dropped out of school, the staff will provide instruction to assist the resident in obtaining his or her GED.

Central Ohio Youth Center Detention Use (2011-2021)				
Year	Youth	Days	%Use*	CRC*
2011	181	1,059	17.05%	
2012	206	1,470	28.30%	
2013	187	945.5	17.57%	
2014	154	925.5	20.36%	
2015	220	1,227.5	18.09%	5
2016	287	1,830	25.45%	3
2017	302	1,789	23.97%	3
2018	277	1,140	20.25%	2
2019	200	1,267	24.20%	4
2020	63	396.5	13.70%	1
2021	152	817	15.71%	1

* Percentage of use between the four counties that share COYC.

**Community Residential Center (CRC) secure residential program for adjudicated juvenile offenders.

COYC has been recognized by the National Center for Child Traumatic Stress for providing the organizational leadership and support necessary for the implementation of Trauma and Grief Component Therapy for Adolescents (TGCTA).

CASA Program of Delaware & Union Counties

On March 21, 2016, the Court-Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program, operating in Delaware County Juvenile Court since 1984, was implemented in Union County. Together the Courts created the CASA Program of Delaware and Union Counties. The program is run jointly by the Judges of both Courts.

In abuse, neglect and dependency cases, the Courts appoint a CASA to serve as the Guardian ad litem for the child. CASAs are highly trained volunteer advocates who gather information and prepare written reports regarding the best interests, needs and wants of each child. The CASA investigates all circumstances regarding the child, regularly meets with the child, their caregivers and the parties, writes several extensive reports and also attends court hearings to advocate for the child. The CASA Program recruits, trains and supports the volunteers.

All CASA volunteers pass necessary background checks and complete an initial 30-hour pre-service training regarding courtroom procedures, social services, the juvenile justice system and the special needs of abused and neglected children. Continuing education is available at the local, state and national level. Local CASA administrators are available to continue training and support the local CASA. The time commitment for each case varies, but on average, a CASA dedicates about 10 hours a month to a case. A CASA stays with a case until it is closed and typically will not have more than one case at a time.

In 2021, the CASA Program experienced growth and expansion. The program trained 25 new volunteers, all of whom were sworn into service. These new volunteers were assigned to children and immediately began advocating for children in both counties. With COVID-19 still

being an issue, the volunteer CASA/GALs managed to continue their strong advocacy and exceed expectations.

In January 2020, the Union County Juvenile Court began appointing CASAs as the child's Guardian ad litem in most cases. In July 2021, the Delaware County Juvenile Court adopted the same a CASA/GAL appointment model. The CASA/GAL volunteers have access to and are represented by a contract attorney who serves as counsel in both counties. The change in Delaware county was embraced as it was in Union County and has provided a higher level of volunteer satisfaction. In 2021, 36 abuse, neglect, dependent case referrals were made to the CASA/GAL program in Union County and 33 were accepted (91%). In Delaware County, 56 referrals were made to the CASA Program and 100% of those referrals were served by a CASA Volunteer.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic presented challenges in 2021, the CASA Program provided strong, impactful advocacy for abused and neglected children of both Delaware and Union Counties.

CASA Program of Delaware & Union Counties					
Volunteer Hours, Children Served and Case Outcomes (2017-2021)					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total Volunteer CASA Advocates	42	44	47	56	63
Hours of Service	4,600+	5,000+	5,000+	5,000+	7,200+
Miles Driven for Casework	28,000+	40,000+	40,000+	24,000+	49,000+
Children Served					
Continuing from Prior Year	89	94	110	128	173
New Children	105	93	118	145	86
Total	194	187	228	273	259
Cases Closed	100	77	100	100	97
Gender					
Girls	93	83	115	133	127
Boys	101	104	113	130	122
Ages					
0-5	53	77	81	112	95
6-11	33	52	68	84	89
12-15	12	41	50	36	39
16-17	4	9	21	25	21
18+	3	8	8	6	5