



Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

News

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Juvenile Drug Court to be part of “Reconnecting McDowell”

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CHARLESTON, W.Va. – A new Juvenile Drug Court will be part of the “Reconnecting McDowell Project.”

Supreme Court Chief Justice Menis Ketchum, Justice Robin Jean Davis, and Administrative Director Steve Canterbury will announce the creation of the drug court during a ceremony at 1 p.m. Monday, April 16, at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Charleston.

They will be joined in person by Twelfth Family Court Circuit Judges Lisa K. Clark and Mary Ellen Griffith, who will be the judges in charge of the juvenile drug court. Eighth Judicial Circuit (McDowell County) Judges Booker T. Stephens and Rudolph J. Murensky, II, will participate via live video hookup.

There currently are twelve other juvenile drug courts serving fourteen counties in West Virginia. Two other counties besides McDowell County are developing them.

West Virginia juvenile drug courts are cooperative efforts of the juvenile justice, social service, law enforcement, and education systems. They divert non-violent juvenile offenders exhibiting alcohol or substance abuse behavior from the traditional juvenile court process to an intensive, individualized treatment process. The goal is to reduce future court involvement for these youth.

On any given day in West Virginia, approximately 6,500 youths are under some form of court-ordered diversion program or supervision by a probation officer. Annual West Virginia juvenile probation reports demonstrate that controlled-substance violations are the third-largest category of offenses charged. This fact is the motivating reason behind the development of juvenile drug courts in West Virginia.

For more information about drug courts in West Virginia, see the Probation Services section of the West Virginia Judiciary website: <http://www.courtswv.gov/court-administration/probation/probation-services.html>.

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