



Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

News

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Family Treatment Courts Expand in West Virginia

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CHARLESTON, W.Va. – The West Virginia court system is expanding its initial five-county Family Treatment Court program to three additional counties which include Braxton, Logan and McDowell Counties.

The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR) has allocated up to \$1.5 million of funds obtained in connection with a recent pharmaceutical settlement to Family Treatment Courts. Such funding may continue to be available for the next three years.

In 2021, if funding is available, another three Family Treatment Courts are expected to open in locations that have not yet been determined. The current Family Treatment Courts in Boone, Nicholas, Ohio, Randolph, and Roane Counties will continue to be funded through a separate grant from DHHR.

Family Treatment Courts are designed to return children to a safer home environment and achieve permanency faster and more effectively than traditional methods. Family Treatment Courts serve individuals with substance use disorders who are also involved in child abuse and neglect cases. The Supreme Court provides oversight, technical assistance, and training. A State Family Treatment Court Advisory Committee and the Supreme Court Division of Probation Services set criteria for eligibility and participation.

“Sadly, substance abuse often leads to abuse and neglect of children. In many cases, the best interest of the children requires that they be permanently removed from their homes. However, Family Treatment Courts represent a promising new approach designed to help restore families in those situations where, with the right treatment and assistance, families can be properly reunited and the children can avoid the trauma of being permanently removed from their families,” said Chief Justice Tim Armstead.

The Supreme Court of Appeals worked with the West Virginia Legislature to enact House Bill 3057 in 2019 which created a Family Treatment Court pilot program. The new grant will allow the program to expand beyond the pilot program.

“Family treatment courts allow parents with a substance use disorder to receive services and support to be successful and unite timely with their children,” added Linda Watts, Commissioner of DHHR’s Bureau for Children and Families. “We appreciate the partnership with the Supreme Court.”

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