



# Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

## News

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### **Nicholas County Family Treatment Court Holds Opening Ceremony**

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Photos available for use by media on SmugMug <https://wvcourts.smugmug.com/>

SUMMERSVILLE, W.Va. – The Nicholas County Circuit Courtroom was packed on Friday for the opening ceremony for the county’s Family Treatment Court, the fifth and final pilot site for Family Treatment Courts in West Virginia.

“This is a big deal for Nicholas County,” said Twenty-Eighth Judicial Circuit Judge Stephen O. Callaghan. “Let’s get this rolling. Let’s make this work. I can’t wait.”

Family Treatment Courts are designed to protect children while helping parents who have been adjudicated in abuse and/or neglect cases overcome substance abuse disorders before they permanently lose custody of their children. The ultimate goal is reuniting families and returning children to safe, loving homes.

The other pilots are in Boone, Ohio, Randolph and Roane Counties. So far the five pilot courts have 30 participants who are parents of 55 children.

Judge Callaghan said he and others in Nicholas County worked hard to make sure their county was one of the pilot sites. “We are dedicated to this,” he said. He thanked the Supreme Court for choosing Nicholas County. “A decision made at a meeting in Charleston will have a large effect on this county.”

Chief Justice Tim Armstead said abuse and neglect cases have increased within the West Virginia court system as a result of the rise in illegal drug use. “We know we need new solutions. This is one of the new and exciting approaches we believe will help West Virginia.”

Justice Evan Jenkins noted the Supreme Court’s commitment and support for the Family Treatment Court programs being started around the state. “We must invest in our children,” he said.

Justice Beth Walker said the Supreme Court is committed to the Family Treatment Courts, which about half the states have. They should work especially well here because, she said, “In West Virginia, we work together really well.”

The justices were accompanied to Nicholas County by Probation Services Director Stephanie Bond and State Family Treatment Court Coordinator Chau-tle’ Haught.

The Legislature in 2019 permitted the Supreme Court to create and implement a Family Treatment Court pilot program. The Supreme Court provides oversight, technical assistance, and training. The DHHR’s Office of Drug Control Policy provided the grant

funding for the first year to implement the Family Treatment Courts in Ohio, Randolph, Roane and Nicholas Counties. Additional funding was secured with a federal grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to implement an additional court in Boone County, which was the first to open.

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