



Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

News

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New Family Treatment Courts to Open in Raleigh, Putnam Counties

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CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Two new family treatment courts (FTCs) are preparing to open in Raleigh and Putnam Counties, bringing the number of FTCs in West Virginia to 13.

The Raleigh County Family Treatment Court will open in a public ceremony at noon on April 6 at the Raleigh County Courthouse ceremonial courtroom. Tenth Judicial Circuit (Raleigh County) Judge Andrew Dimlich will oversee the treatment court and Jessica Hilton will be the Family Treatment Court Case Coordinator.

On April 11, the Putnam County Family Treatment Court will open with a public ceremony at 1 p.m. on the third floor of the Putnam County Judicial Building. Twenty-Ninth Judicial Circuit (Putnam County) Judge Joseph Reeder will oversee the treatment court and Jilyan “Page” Harris will be the Family Treatment Court Case Coordinator.

Both new FTCs will be funded by a 2022 grant from the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

“Treatment courts demonstrate how the West Virginia judicial branch can help improve the lives of our citizens and families,” said Chief Justice Beth Walker. “These programs succeed because of the hard work of the participants, and also the diligence and generosity of judges who volunteer their time to support these programs in addition to their other duties.”

FTCs serve individuals with substance use problems who are also involved in child abuse and neglect cases but have not permanently lost custody of their children. FTCs are designed to make homes safe for children to return to and can achieve permanency for children faster and more effectively than traditional methods. Participation is voluntary.

West Virginia’s first family treatment court opened in October 2019 in Boone County. Statewide, there have been 137 graduates so far among 361 family treatment court participants with 555 children served.

FTCs use a non-adversarial approach and bring together professionals in child welfare, substance use treatment, mental health, and other fields to intervene in an abuse and neglect matter.

“Family treatment court evaluations have consistently found that, compared with parents receiving conventional child welfare and dependency court interventions, parents participating in family treatment courts enter treatment more quickly, stay longer, complete treatment at higher rates, receive more court review hearings, and reunite with their children more often,” according to the National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare (<https://ncsacw.acf.hhs.gov/topics/family-treatment-courts.aspx>).

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