



# Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia

## News

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### Supreme Court Secures Grant to Sustain Family Treatment Courts Through Sept. 30

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CHARLESTON, W.Va. – The Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia today announced it has secured a \$280,000 State Opioid Response grant which will be used to fund the operations of Family Treatment Courts through September.

“The Supreme Court is grateful to receive this grant, which will allow us to continue operating our Family Treatment Courts over the next two months while we pursue other funding possibilities,” Chief Justice William R. “Bill” Wooton said. “We would like to thank the team at the state Bureau for Behavioral Health, including Interim Commissioner Nicholas Stuchell, along with the staff at the Office of Drug Control Policy for working with the Supreme Court’s Administrative Office to secure these critical funds.”

[Family Treatment Courts](#) are specialized, problem-solving courts designed to support parents in overcoming substance use disorders while working toward the safe reunification of their families.

They offer immediate intervention, intensive supervision and comprehensive treatment services to help parents access recovery resources in a timely manner, which helps reduce the amount of time children spend in foster care prior to their return to a safe home environment with their families. There are currently [14 Family Treatment Courts operating in 18 counties](#).

State Opioid Response Grants use funds provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and are administered by the West Virginia Department of Human Services (DoHS), Bureau for Behavioral Health (BBH) SOR Team.

The Legislature created Family Treatment Courts as a pilot program in 2019, later making them a permanent program under supervision of the Supreme Court in 2021. Family Treatment Courts function as a collaborative effort among the Circuit Court, Child Protective Services, substance abuse treatment providers, and other key stakeholders invested in the well-being of children and families.

In that time, the Courts have reunited 437 children with FTC-graduate parents and demonstrated notable reductions in the amount of time those children spend in foster care while the cases progress.

The average time a child spends in foster care under a Family Treatment Court is approximately 10.8 months, compared to 18.8 months for West Virginia children whose families are not in a treatment court program. Only 10.7 percent of those children involved in Family Treatment Courts have re-entered foster care within two years of their family being in the program.

Through this reduced time in foster care, it is estimated the state has saved approximately \$7 million in foster care or kinship subsidy payments through Family Treatment Courts.

Additionally, there have been 17 infants born during their mother's Family Treatment Court participation, and all 17 were born free of any illicit substances.

Since inception, these courts have been funded through federal grants and McKesson Corporation settlement funds administered by the West Virginia Office of Drug Control Policy. However, the transition of settlement fund distribution from the Office of Drug Control Policy to the West Virginia First Foundation has created a gap in the flow of grant funding.

In an attempt to provide some certainty in funding for the treatment courts, the Supreme Court included an additional \$1 million in appropriations as part of its [Fiscal Year 2026 budget request](#) to cover their operations for this fiscal year. Gov. Patrick Morrisey included this funding in [his proposed budget bill](#) submitted to the Legislature at the beginning of the 2025 regular session. However, lawmakers did not provide the judicial branch with any increases in funding for the current fiscal year as part of the final approved version of the budget bill.

While the State Opioid Response grant will fund the Family Treatment Courts program through Sept. 30, Supreme Court staff are continuing to work with the West Virginia First Foundation and state and federal grant programs to secure additional funding.

"We believe these courts have demonstrated their effectiveness in returning children to a safe home environment while also showing they can ease some of the burden on our strained foster care system," Chief Justice Wooton said. "We hope to continue working with lawmakers and grant administrators to educate them on the benefits of Family Treatment Courts and why they are a worthwhile investment in our communities."

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