

SENECA COUNTY JUVENILE AND PROBATE COURT



2022
Annual Report

Judge Jay A. Meyer

It is an honor and privilege to serve the citizens of Seneca County.



FROM JUDGE MEYER:

I am incredibly proud of the positive impact that the Juvenile and Probate Court continues to have on our community. It has been a true honor and privilege to serve the citizens of Seneca County as Judge of the Juvenile and Probate Court since February 9, 2009.

Our Court is guided by the mission and promise to “serve the citizens of the community with dedication, integrity and professionalism. We will strive to assure the safety, security and best interests of those we serve to the best of our abilities.”

We work diligently to serve as good stewards of the resources we receive. I pledge to continue our dedicated efforts to keep our costs down while providing excellent services to our citizens.

I invite you to review this report and our website at www.senecajpcourt.com for more information. If you have additional questions, please feel free to reach out via the contact information found on our website.

Respectfully,

Judge Jay A. Meyer

The Bench

The Honorable *Judge Jay A. Meyer* was elected by Seneca County Voters to serve as their Juvenile and Probate Judge in 2008. He was re-elected in 2014 and 2020. Judge Meyer is a graduate of Tiffin Columbian High School. He received both his BA and Juris Doctor from Ohio Northern University. Judge Meyer supports Seneca County youth, families, and the Court's Mission.

Magistrate

Donald S. Bennett was appointed as Magistrate by Judge Meyer in June of 2009. Magistrate Bennett received his Juris Doctor from the University of Toledo College of Law.

Prior to his appointment, he was in private practice for 20 years, concentrating in the areas of juvenile, domestic, and criminal trial practice.



Magistrate

Tiffany E. Cavanaugh was appointed as Magistrate by Judge Meyer in January of 2016. Magistrate Cavanaugh received her Juris Doctor degree from Ohio Northern University.

Mediator

Ms. Cavanaugh also serves as the Court's Mediator. She was appointed by Judge Meyer as Mediator in May of 2013. Tiffany is a qualified Mediator with experience in complex Juvenile and Probate matters.

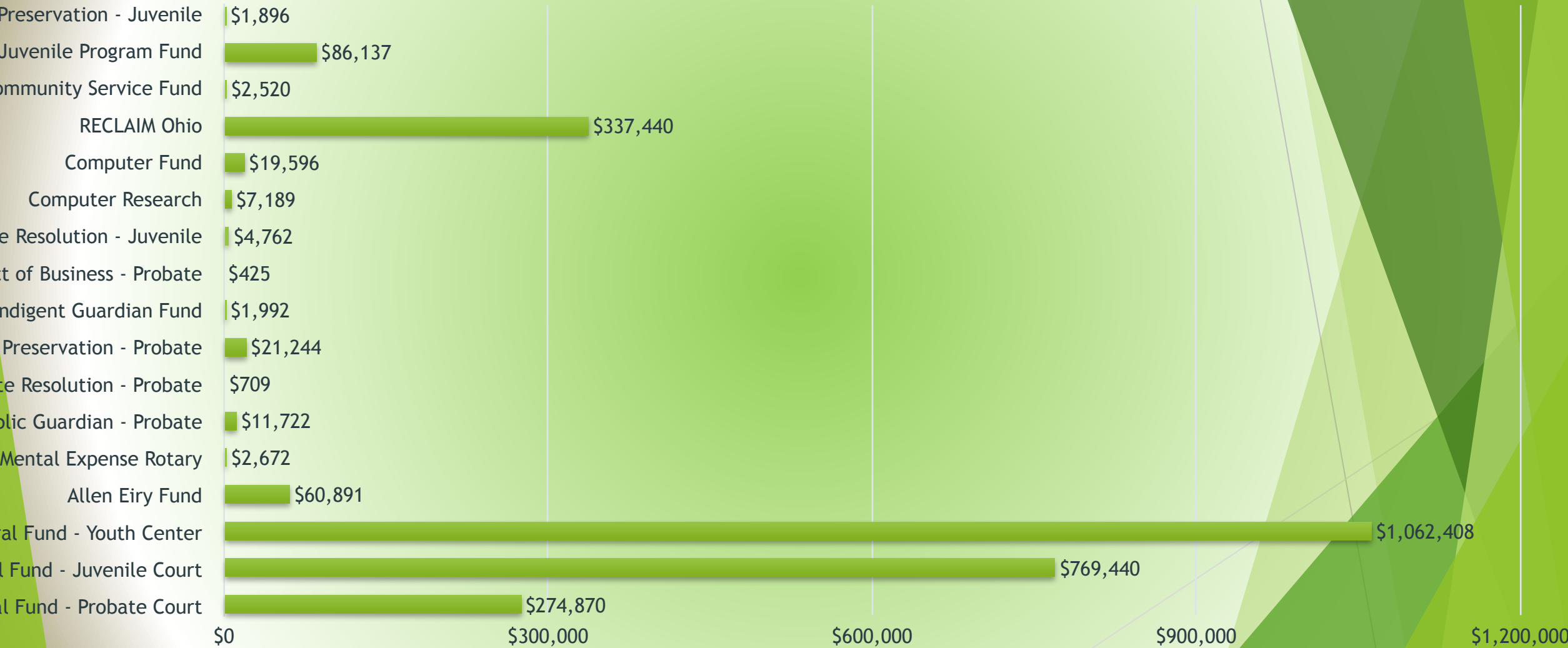
Stacy Wilson– Court Administrator

Cathy Bean– Administrative Clerk

JUVENILE COURT	PROBATE COURT
Gina Reuter– Chief Deputy Clerk	Dana Eborg – Chief Deputy Clerk/ Investigator
<input type="checkbox"/> Linda Frank – Deputy Clerk	<input type="checkbox"/> Amy Littlejohn – Deputy Clerk
<input type="checkbox"/> Melissa Bowers– Deputy Clerk	<input type="checkbox"/> Nicole Johnston – Deputy Clerk/ Investigator
<input type="checkbox"/> Chloe Seislove – Deputy Clerk	<input type="checkbox"/> Jay Rishty – Public Guardian
<input type="checkbox"/> Jillian Banks – Records Clerk – Part-time	

2022 Court Expenses

General Fund; Grant Funds; Court Funds - Total \$2,644,833



PROBATE COURT

Pursuant to the first Ohio Constitution of 1802, the Court of Common Pleas had exclusive jurisdiction over all Probate matters. The updated Ohio Constitution of 1851 shifted this power by creating a separate Probate Court in each of Ohio's 88 counties.

Seneca County's Probate Court was established in 1851. William Lang was the first Probate Judge serving from 1851 – 1855. He wrote *History of Seneca County: From the Close of the Revolutionary War to July 1880*.

Probate Court handles wills, administration of estates and trusts, adoptions, marriage licenses, name changes, and appointments of guardians for minors and incompetent adults.
[Ohio Revised Code (R.C.) 2101.24]

Judge Meyer serves as Judge for both the Seneca County Probate and Juvenile Court



Probate Court Case Breakdown 2022

	OPEN	CLOSED
Marriage Licenses Issued	306	
Estates	329	361
Minor Guardianships	1	1
Incompetent Guardianships	26	30
Trusts	4	2
Civil	18	21
Adoption	20	15
Mental Illness	11	14
Minor Settlement	6	7
Name Change	27	26
Conservatorship	0	0
Wrongful Death	0	1
Delayed Birth Registration	6	5
TOTAL	448	483

Probate Court Year in Review

Projects implemented/completed during the year:

- ✓ Continued preparing Court records for microfilming and scanning by Bowling Green State University Center for Archival Collections. This is an ongoing effort to preserve and retain Court records
- ✓ Prepared Naturalization Records to be scanned and microfilmed by Bowling Green State University Center for Archival Collections
- ✓ Transferred historical Court records from the old Youth Center to the new County storage facility

Goals for 2023:

- ☐ Continue the preservation of Probate records through imaging and/or microfilm
- ☐ Update the Court network to add Naturalization Records and attach the scanned images from Bowling Green State University Center for Archival Collections
- ☐ Update the Probate Court Case Management System



Seneca County Guardianship Program

The **Seneca County Guardianship Program** provides guardianship and conservatorship assistance to eligible indigent incompetent people. This life maintaining and life sustaining Program would not be possible without generous grant funding provided by the Allen Eiry Fund and the Mental Health and Recovery Services Board of Seneca, Ottawa, Sandusky and Wyandot Counties.

In 2022, the Guardianship Program assisted 34 individuals. Some participants were housed in a medical facility and required assistance with decision making only. Other participants remained in their homes but needed assistance with housekeeping, medical care, and transportation.

The Public Guardian has made family involvement a goal for the Program. Now that COVID restrictions are beginning to lift in most facilities, Program participants can once again receive visits from family members. The Guardian continues to help facilitate those visits and sets up monthly phone and video conferences for families when visitation is not possible.



Juvenile Court

- The Seneca County Juvenile Court handles the filing and processing of the following types of matters:
 - Juvenile Delinquency and Unruly
 - Juvenile Traffic
 - Abuse, Neglect, and Dependency
 - Paternity
 - Custody and Child Support
 - Some Adult Criminal Cases
- The Juvenile Court System was created in 1902. The Honorable Hal W. Michaels served as Probate Judge during this time. When the Juvenile Court System was created, the Probate Judge assumed responsibility for Juvenile Court as well. At age 29, Judge Michaels was the youngest judge elected as Seneca County Probate Judge and served from 1903-1909.

Juvenile Court Cases 2022

	FILED	CONCLUDED
Delinquent	320	312
Traffic	175	175
Abuse/Neglect/Dependent	65	54
Unruly	50	40
Adult	71	66
Permanent Custody	3	6
Change of Custody	158	155
Support Modification	381	367
Parentage	13	11
UIFSA	3	3
Other	20	20
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>1,259</i>	<i>1,209</i>

Juvenile Court Year in Review

Projects implemented/completed during the year:

- ✓ Completed the organization and transfer of historical Court records into climate-controlled storage for proper preservation in accordance with our Local Rules and the Ohio Rules of Superintendence
- ✓ Continued to review and improve Court processes and procedures to increase efficiencies and ensure that the needs of our public and the County agencies with which we interact are met on a daily basis
- ✓ Reinstated the TTI Program
- ✓ Continued to improve the relationship between the Court and the Seneca County Child Support Enforcement Agency to streamline the flow of Court documents and provide free mediation services for individuals to assist with parenting time issues
- ✓ Updated Local Rules to include a technology plan which promotes uniformity in the practice and procedures related to the use of technology in the courtroom, such as telephonic and video appearances

Goals for 2023:

- ❑ Continue to increase efficiencies in Court processes, including updating the Juvenile Court Case Management System, review/analysis of current incoming phone call routing, and creation of additional standards for best practices in the Clerk's Office
- ❑ Add displays in our common areas to include historical items and artwork from area youth to help create a positive and inspirational environment for all
- ❑ Provide training resources and opportunities for Court Staff to continue to learn and grow in their roles
- ❑ Implement additional security measures to ensure the safety of Court patrons and Staff



► MEDIATION

► The Seneca County Juvenile and Probate Court offers Mediation Services

► Mediation is a problem-solving process in which a neutral mediator helps facilitate communication between parties so that they can work towards a mutually acceptable resolution. Mediation puts the power back in the hands of the parties by empowering them to come up with their own solutions and offering them the opportunity to resolve their issues together.

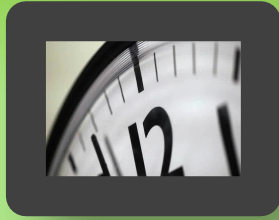
MEDIATION WORKS BECAUSE:

- Both sides have the opportunity to be heard
- The parties are in control of the agreement
- Multiple ways of solving problems are explored
- The final agreement is acceptable to the parties
- Communication is clear and specific

► In 2022, the Court Mediator mediated 20 civil mediations, 2 probate mediations, and 22 truancy mediations.

► Of the 20 civil mediations, our Court continued to partner with the Seneca County Department of Job and Family Services to conduct 10 mediations addressing non-financial/parenting time issues at no charge for families following their administrative child support hearings.

Tiffany Cavanaugh-Mediator



TIME TO INVEST

After several years of planning, Seneca County Juvenile Court was proud to launch the “Time to Invest” Program (TTI) in the fall of 2019. TTI was a success for its first semester, and the youth who participated experienced improved grades and behaviors. The Court was looking forward to the same outcomes for the spring semester of 2020, but unfortunately, TTI was suspended in March due to COVID-19. We resumed the program in the fall of 2022.

TTI is an alternative to detention developed by Judge Jay Meyer and the Seneca County Juvenile Court and Youth Center Staff to address the criminogenic needs of our youth by efficiently and impactfully improving their educational, vocational, therapeutic, and socialization deficiencies. TTI utilizes intervention philosophies that align with nationally recognized evidence-based models to provide intensive services for youth not likely available to them at their home schools.

TTI is designed to accommodate up to twelve youth between the ages of 12 and 18 at any given time. The Program operates primarily in a designated and separate location inside the Seneca County Youth Center from Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. until 1:45 p.m. during the school year.

Research evidence reveals that academic support, coupled with counseling, workforce development, case management, mentoring, and family interventions are more successful at preventing recidivism and developing a path to success for youth. In Seneca County, we developed TTI to apply this new line of thinking in our community and we are proud of the Program’s positive results.

JUVENILE COURT INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Seneca County Juvenile Court works closely with area higher education institutions to provide internship opportunities and real-world work experiences to qualified students.

In 2022, two Terra State Community College students experienced 70 hours each and one Heidelberg University student experienced 120 hours during their internships with the Juvenile Court. Our interns accompany Probation and Diversion Officers to schools and home contacts and attend meetings with officers and families to discuss case plans. Interns also have the opportunity to accompany Probation Officers to multiple types of hearings and Youth Center contacts. We strive to introduce our interns to as many educational experiences as possible during their tenure with the Court.



Office of Court Services

Kendra Shearer-Director

Linda Cohen *	Probation Officer
Jason French	Compliance/ Probation Officer
Kody Brewer (Jan.- Sept.)	Probation Officer
Rob Swartz (Dec.)	Probation Officer
Abbi Norville	Probation Officer
Brittany Metcalf (Apr. – Nov.)	Diversion Officer
Ali Hoch (Dec.)	Diversion Officer
Jim Jarrett*	Director of Community Outreach
*Paid by General Fund	

The Court Services Department helps connect youth and families with interventions and services available in our community upon their initial contact with the Juvenile Court and continues to do so throughout a youth's Court involvement. Court Services houses and coordinates the:

- Probation Program
- Diversion Program
- Community Outreach

Evidence-based practices and interventions, such as Motivational Interviewing techniques, the Carey Guide curriculum, and the Ohio Youth Assessment System provide Court Officers the tools they need to appropriately measure risk, provide intervention, set goals and objectives, and measure outcomes.

The Court believes in and applies the least restrictive setting required to protect youth and the community. This principle, supported by outcome measures and a large volume of research, suggests that more restrictive settings often do more harm than good to low- and moderate-risk youth. Accordingly, Judge Meyer and our Court Services team work together with community partners to help create individualized plans and services for each youth and family to establish the appropriate balance of accountability and assistance while simultaneously creating a safer and more secure community for all.

Court Services

The Department of Court Services is largely funded by RECLAIM Ohio.



WHAT IS RECLAIM OHIO?

RECLAIM stands for

Reasoned and Equitable Community and Local Alternatives to the Incarceration of Minors.

RECLAIM is a funding initiative which encourages Juvenile Courts to explore community-based options to meet the needs of juvenile offenders and youth at risk of offending.

RECLAIM Grant funds pay for the following programs:

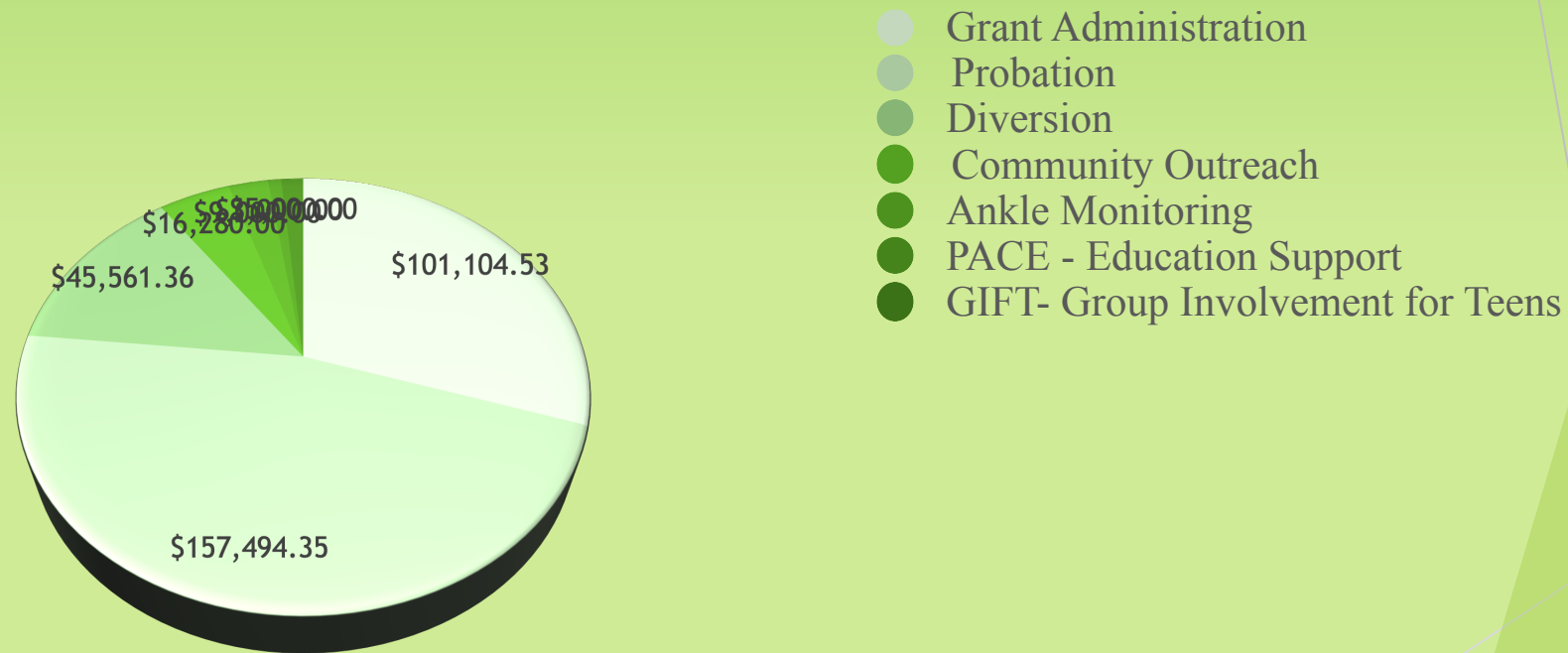
- Grant Administration
- Probation
- PACE- Educational Services
- GIFT- Group Involvement for Teens
- Community Outreach
- Ankle Monitoring
- Diversion

HOW WE USED OUR RECLAIM GRANT FUNDS IN 2022

<p>Grant Administration</p> <p>*7 staff received 308 hours of training in FY22</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported Director of Court Services salary and benefits and 60% of the Administrative Clerk salary and benefits • Funded Motivational Interviewing training provided by Case Western Reserve University • Funded additional training for Court Officers
<p>Probation</p> <p>*served 178 adjudicated youth in FY22</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported 3 Probation Officer salaries and benefits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Probation Officers provide supervision and case management services to adjudicated youth to reduce subsequent delinquent behavior. • Funded Drug Screen Tests and supplies
<p>Diversion</p> <p>*served 149 youth in FY22</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported 1 Diversion Officer salary and benefits • Funded programing supplies
<p>Community Outreach</p> <p>* served 200 youth in FY22</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This program gives youth the opportunity to work off Court ordered community service hours and restitution • Supported the purchase of a Ford Transit Van for community outreach efforts
<p>Ankle Monitoring</p> <p>*served 81 youth in FY22</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funded the purchase of ankle monitors to closely track youth who required intensive supervision as an alternative to detention
<p>PACE</p> <p>* served 17 youth in FY22</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This program targets youth who are struggling in school by providing them tutoring services with Heidelberg University students
<p>GIFT</p> <p>*served 12 youth in FY22</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth participated in a 10-session equine-assisted trauma group

RECLAIM Ohio Total FY 2022 Budget

\$337,440.24



Community Outreach

- ▶ Community Outreach is about giving and contributing. Seneca County Juvenile Court offers this program to help Court ordered youth give back to the community through the completion of community service hours. This program also offers youth an opportunity to pay Court ordered restitution to victims through their participation in the work program. The work program provides youth a chance to earn an hourly credit of \$9.30 (state minimum wage) to be paid to their victim(s) as restitution. Youths can earn up to a maximum of \$1,500.00 each.
- ▶ Since Judge Meyer took office, youth have completed more than 74,000 hours of community service, and as a result, victims have received more than \$132,000 in restitution.



Planting Garden



Before

Litter Pick Up



After



Christmas Decorating

DIVERSION PROGRAM – ORC 2151.18(B)

The Seneca County Juvenile Court's Diversion Program limits formal youth involvement with the Court by diverting first time low-risk unruly/delinquent offenders from formal adjudication. This program holds youth accountable for their actions, but also minimizes their penetration into the Juvenile Justice System. Research shows that increased/formal contact with the Court for low-risk youthful offenders does more harm than good.

In FY22, a total of 149 youth participated in Diversion. 74 youth successfully completed the program, 14 unsuccessfully completed the program, and 61 youth carried their efforts over into FY23. Of the 149 diversion participants in 2022, 32 involved truancy cases. Of those 32 truancy cases, 14 successfully completed Diversion, 6 were unsuccessful and adjudicated, and 11 were carried over into FY23.

In Diversion, the youth/family enter into a voluntary agreement to address the offense. Following the youth's successful completion of the agreement terms, there is no record of the charge. In addition, successful Diversion saves the cost of Court appointed counsel which is conservatively estimated at \$250.00 per case. With 74 successfully completed cases in 2022, the Court experienced an estimated cost savings of \$18,500.00. In addition, each participating youth/family makes a food donation of at least \$5.00 per youth/family. In FY 2022, we collected 74 food donations for our community totaling \$370.00.

JUVENILE COURT - COURT REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

4-H CARTEENS Program

A teen facilitated traffic safety program for first time juvenile traffic offenders Partnership with OSU Extension



3rd Millennium Classrooms

Offers on-line courses with evidence- based strategies for behavior change intervention



Carey Guides

Tools for Probation Officers to use to support Behavior Change and Recidivism Reduction

GIFT Program

Group Involvement for Teens
Equine-assisted therapy
Life skills and coping skills



Reality Works

Interactive technology used to educate youth on topics such as fetal alcohol syndrome, prenatal drug exposure, shaken baby syndrome, and pregnancy prevention



PACE Program

academic tutoring offered in partnership with Heidelberg University

SENECA COUNTY YOUTH CENTER

The Seneca County Youth Center, a division of the Seneca County Juvenile Court, is a 24-bed detention facility. The facility's construction began in April 2012 and was completed in February of 2013. This facility is the State of Ohio's newest facility and replaces a facility that was constructed in the 1950's. The Youth Center was made possible by a grant from the State of Ohio, the forethought of the Seneca County Commissioners, and the work of three Juvenile Court Judges.



YOUTH CENTER STAFF

Sarah Canalos– Director

Other Positions Include:

2 Detention Coordinators

1 Program Coordinator

2 full time Activities Supervisors

3 full time Head Supervisors

4 full time Shift Leaders

9 full time Juvenile Corrections Officers

Numerous part time Juvenile Correction Officers (based upon need)



EDUCATION at the Youth Center...

- ▶ North Central Ohio Educational Service Center (NCOESC) provides all educational services for the youth at the Youth Center.
- ▶ All of the youth are required to attend school while detained. This includes a minimum of 5.5 hours per weekday during the school year and a minimum of 2.5 hours per weekday during the summer.
- ▶ Residents receive individual work assignments from their respective schools. Basic skills in English, Math, Science, and Social Studies are available through electronic education programs.

Counseling at the Youth Center

Residents have the opportunity to participate in mental health counseling during their time at the Seneca County Youth Center.

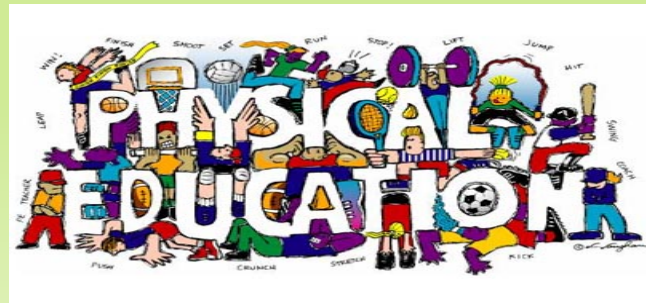
Funding for the Youth Center Behavioral Health Program is paid for in part by local Seneca County levy funds from the Mental Health and Recovery Services Board of Seneca, Ottawa, Sandusky, and Wyandot Counties.

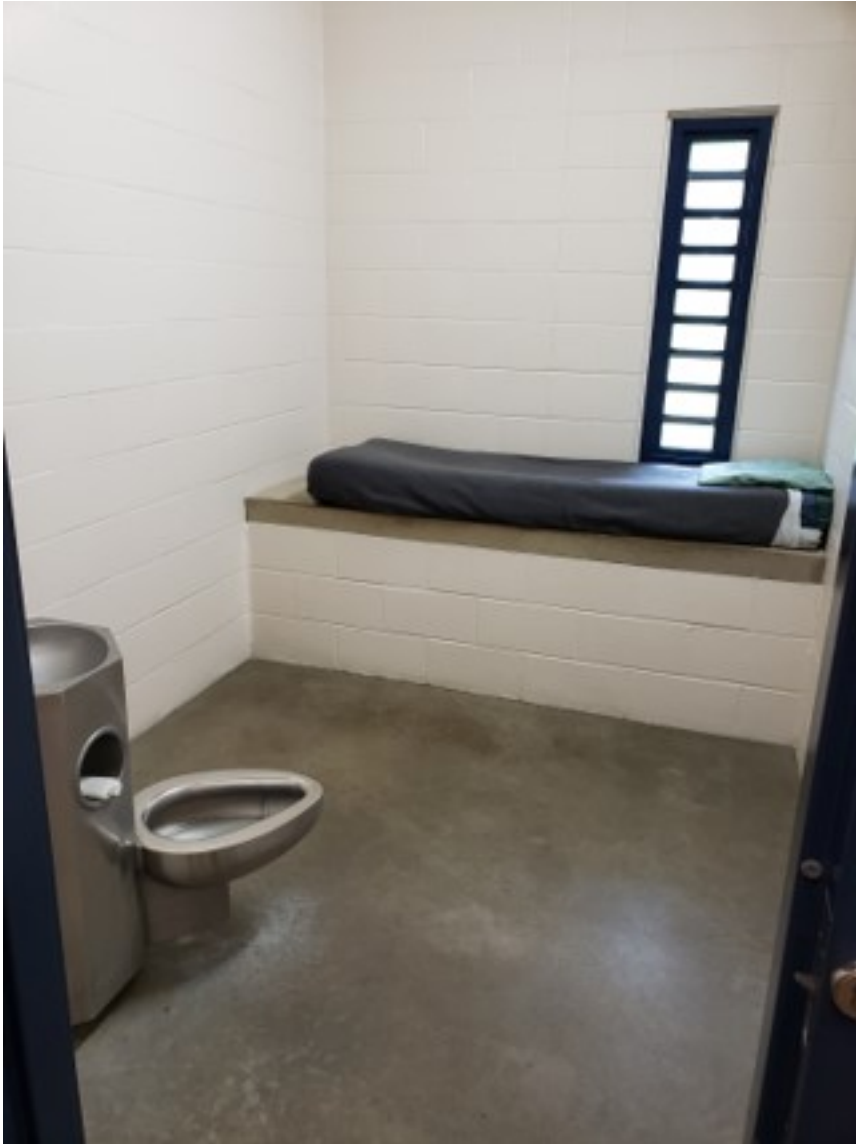
Behavioral Health Services are provided by Firelands Counseling and Recovery Services of Seneca County and Wellness Counseling Solutions, LLC dba Wyandot Counseling Associates.

Youth who received behavioral health services	Primarily MH Service Hours	Primarily AOD Service Hours	Successful Discharge	Unsuccessful Discharge
294	325	325	241	0

In addition to receiving academic support, youth in detention stay active from breakfast until bedtime. The Youth Center offers an array of programs, and each youth attends approximately 20 hours of programming per week. Some of the programs offered include:

- *Drug & Alcohol Education/Awareness
- *Life Skills
- *Job Application & Resume Education
- *First Aid/CPR
- *Arts & Crafts
- *Guest Speakers
- *Physical Education
- *Activities to Work on Self-Esteem, Anger Management, Trauma, and Peer Pressure





FELONY OFFENSES	19
Misdemeanor Offenses	265
Other (status, tobacco, alcohol)	0
Seneca County Intakes	168
Other County Intakes	113
Seneca County Sentencing	134
Other County Sentencing	78

Partnerships and Relationships

The Seneca County Juvenile and Probate Court would like to thank the many wonderful partners who work closely with us for the benefit of the Seneca County residents.

- COMMUNITY ACTION FOR REDUCING SUBSTANCE ABUSE (CARSA)
- FIRELANDS COUNSELING AND RECOVERY SERVICES
- SENECA MENTORING YOUTH LINKS (SMYL)
- TIFFIN PARK AND RECREATION
- SENECA COUNTY PARK DISTRICT
- MENTAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES BOARD OF SENECA, SANDUSKY, OTTAWA, AND WYANDOT COUNTIES
- SENECA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES
- ALL AREA SCHOOL DISTRICTS
- AREA COUNSELORS AND COUNSELING SERVICES
- HEIDELBERG UNIVERSITY
- SENECA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

- TIFFIN-SENECA PUBLIC LIBRARY
- FIRST CALL FOR HELP
- OHIO STATE EXTENSION SERVICE
- UNITED WAY
- OTTAWA, SANDUSKY, SENECA COUNTY JOINT SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
- TIFFIN COMMUNITY YMCA
- COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES (CASA)
- ST. FRANCIS EARTH LITERACY CENTER
- CAMP GLEN
- CAMP FIRE BOYS AND GIRLS
- FOSTORIA COMMUNITY YMCA
- PATCHWORKS HOUSE
- TIFFIN UNIVERSITY
- SENECA COUNTY FAMILY AND CHILDREN FIRST COUNSEL