

2023
WARREN COUNTY
PROBATE-JUVENILE COURT
ANNUAL REPORT



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OVERVIEW

This Annual Report is offered to provide an overview of the function and activities of the Warren County Probate-Juvenile Court. The Court consists of five distinct departments: Probate Court, Juvenile Court, Probation Department, Juvenile Detention Center, and the Mary Haven Youth Center.

The Court employs 101 full-time and 13 part-time staff members within its various departments. The Court operates on a budget of approximately \$9.3 million, which is derived from federal, state, and local sources.

WARREN COUNTY PROBATE COURT

The Ohio Constitution and the Ohio Revised Code designate a multitude of duties to Probate Court. In addition to the traditional trusts/estates that are processed through Probate Court, it also handles cases dealing with mental incompetence, disability, mental illness, and adult protective services. Probate Court hears actions which allege a person is mentally ill and subject to court order. In this regard, the Court must also determine the least restrictive treatment setting for those mentally ill persons subject to the Court's jurisdiction.

The Probate Court's jurisdiction includes determination of adult protective services petitions where the Court must decide if an adult over sixty years of age has been neglected, abused, or exploited and if so, what services are necessary to remediate those problems.

Persons seeking name changes must obtain Probate Court permission. In exercising this jurisdiction, the Court is mindful that a person is entitled to change their name as long as reasonable and proper cause exists for the name change and to ensure the name change isn't done to facilitate fraud, the avoidance of creditors, or hinder law enforcement officials in the performance of their duties.

As is obvious by the foregoing descriptions of the Probate Court's jurisdiction, the Court is oftentimes charged with the responsibility of acting in the public interest and looking out for those that cannot, or will not, look out for themselves. It is this philosophy that guides the operation of the Warren County Probate Court.

WARREN COUNTY JUVENILE COURT

The mission of the Juvenile Court is stated in the Ohio Revised Code and the Rules of Juvenile Procedure as promulgated by the Ohio Supreme Court. The guidelines are as follows:

- To provide for the care, protection and mental and physical development of children subject to Chapter 2151 of the Ohio Revised Code.
- To protect the public interest in removing the consequences of criminal behavior and the taint of criminality from children committing delinquent acts and to substitute, therefore, a program of supervision, care, and rehabilitation.
- To achieve the foregoing purposes whenever possible in a family environment, separating the child from its parents only when necessary for his/her welfare or in the interests of public safety.
- To provide judicial procedures through which the parties are assured a fair hearing where their constitutional and other legal rights are recognized and enforced.

Warren County Juvenile Court has developed a broad base of programs and services to help fulfill its mission. Probation intervention is the most widely used technique to address delinquent and unruly behaviors. The Probation Department integrates sanctions, safety, incentives, and rehabilitation efforts to effectively deal with offenders. Our Court also facilitates outpatient programming. Programs and services available to our at-risk youth include anger management; life skills; Real World-Real Money curriculum; community service opportunities; alcohol and drug screenings, assessments, and intervention education and therapy; counseling; parenting education groups; victim impact reporting; sex offender groups; driving interventions; detention center; residential treatment; out of home placement; day treatment program; Evening Reporting Center program; and a Youth Court program which is covered separately in this report.

The Warren County Probate-Juvenile Court, its staff, and I look forward to serving Warren County for years to come.
I am proud to submit to you our 2023 Annual Report.

Judge Joseph W. Kirby

The Mission of the Warren County Probate-Juvenile Court is to resolve matters fairly and timely by providing an impartial, independent and dignified forum, in order to promote respect for the Rule of Law, instill public confidence and trust, protect individual rights and liberties, and ensure public safety.

JURISTS AND DEPARTMENT HEADS

JUDICIAL STAFF	Joseph Kirby	Judge
	Megan Davenport	Magistrate
	Carolyn Duvelius	Magistrate
	Jenna Seitz	Magistrate
	Jeff Stueve	Magistrate
	John Kaspar	Staff Attorney/Mediator
	Mark Helsinger	Chief Bailiff/Judge's Bailiff
	Jessica Coffey	Administrative Assistant to Judge
	Sarah Brownrigg	Assignment Commissioner

Laura Schnecker	Court Administrator	ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF
Amy Jo Jones	Director of Court Services	
Kevin Kincer	Chief Fiscal Officer	
Melissa Perduk	C.A.S.A. Director	

CHIEF		
DEPUTY	Sue Roberts	Probate Court
CLERKS	Beth Farmer-Mason	Juvenile Court

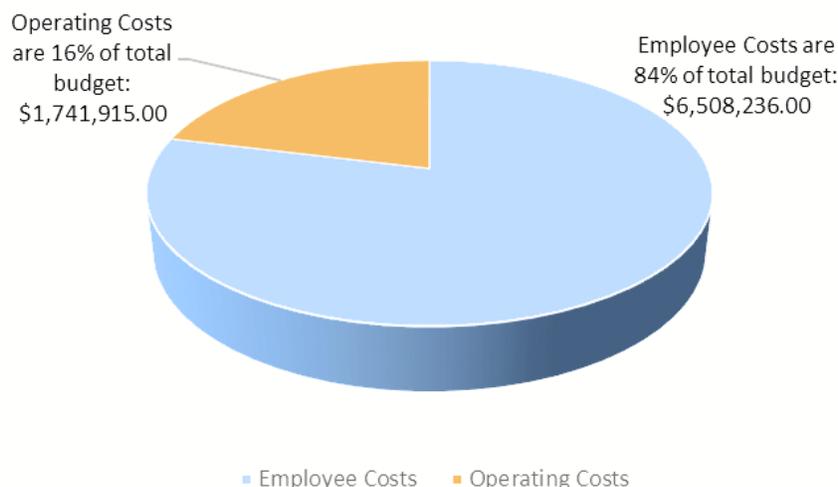
Steve Winters	Chief Probation Officer	SUPERVISION, CORRECTIONS, TREATMENT
Rick Brewster	Superintendent, Juvenile Detention Center	
Mike Goodlett	Superintendent, Mary Haven Youth Center	
Christine Charlton	Director of Court Clinic	

FISCAL DEPARTMENT

The Fiscal Department is responsible for preparation of the annual budgets for Probate Court, Juvenile Court, Juvenile Probation, Juvenile Detention Center and Mary Haven Youth Center. In addition to preparing the annual budgets for these departments, Fiscal is responsible for the preparation of all vouchers for payment of each department's expenditures as well as monitoring and tracking the expenditures incurred to ensure each department operates within its individual budget.

Fiscal maintains employees' sick and vacation records, prepares the bi-weekly payroll, and maintains accurate records of health care expenditures for all departments within the Probate-Juvenile Court.

Additional duties include accounts receivables, accounts payable, and collection of Mary Haven and outside placement support received from Parent(s)/Guardian(s) of juveniles placed by the court; compiling and timely filing quarterly and annual reports; calculation of income to determine eligibility of court-appointed attorneys and guardians ad litem; maintaining records and tracking funds from all grants and maintaining records of and tracking Indigent Guardianship Funds; daily checking of Juvenile Court receipts of costs, fines, bonds, court deposits, and any other receipts which may be paid through that department; issuing checks for bond forfeiture and restitution paid by juveniles to victims; balancing and closing out Juvenile Court's monthly receipts; balancing Juvenile Court's checking account; annually paying unclaimed funds into the Auditor's Office; and checking and preparing for payment all court-appointed attorneys' itemized fee statements and certification for appointed counsel fees.

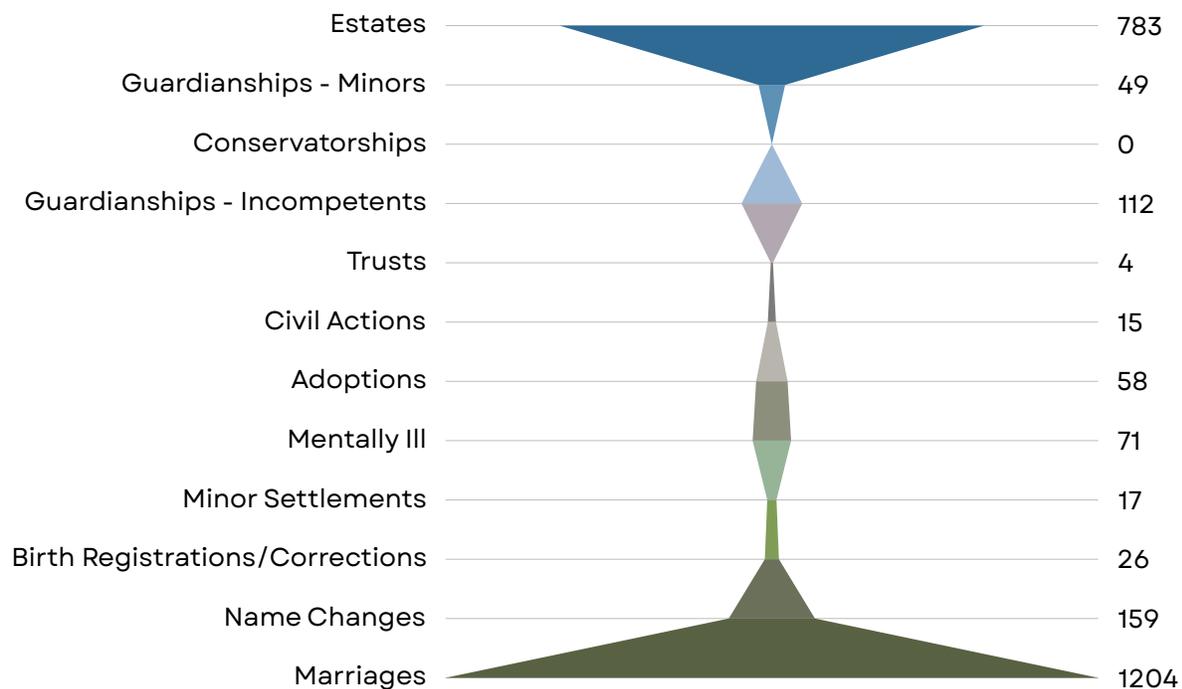


PROBATE COURT

Warren County Probate Court began operations in 1835 and holds the distinction of being one of the oldest continuing operations in the State of Ohio. The Probate Court is established in each county of Ohio to supervise the administration of estates, guardianship proceedings, trusts, wrongful death actions, civil actions, minor's settlements, and matters involving the mentally ill. The Court is also responsible for issuing marriage licenses, adoptions, name changes, and delayed/corrected birth registrations.

Judge Joseph Kirby and the staff of Probate Court, which includes one chief deputy clerk, an assistant chief deputy clerk, and four deputy clerks, are charged by law with the duty of protecting the assets of the parties involved, monitoring the timely filing of documents, and meeting the needs of the citizens of Warren County. In a manner of professionalism and courtesy, the staff handles an emotional public that is dealing with death and mental illness, as well as achieving ambitions of marriage and adoption. The goal for 2023 was to meet the daily demands with efficiency and quality of service.

Cases filed in 2023



Total: 2,498 cases

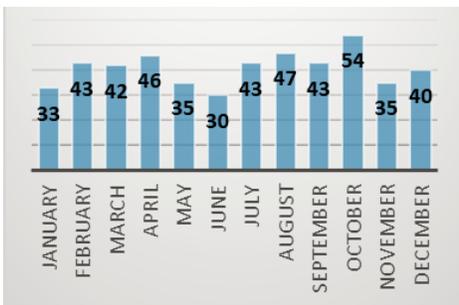
JUVENILE COURT

The purpose of the Juvenile Clerk's Office is to assist in processing and organizing court documents and manage the day-to-day clerical and administrative duties of the court. The Clerk's Office is comprised of a Chief Deputy Clerk, Assistant Chief Deputy Clerk, eight full-time employees, and one part-time employee. Deputy Clerks are charged with maintaining the court's records throughout the life of the case. From the moment the complaint is filed, they are responsible for creating the case file, perfecting service on all parties, distributing the court's orders and decisions, and preserving the file until the case has closed.

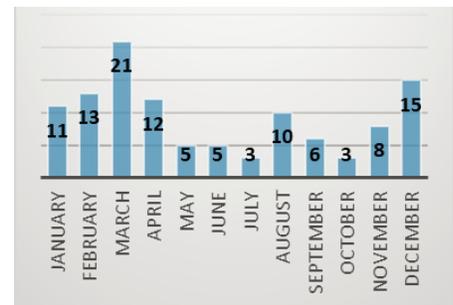
The Juvenile Court accepts civil filings for abuse, neglect, and dependent cases; custody, paternity; support; grandparent power of attorney; and civil protection orders. Criminal filings consist of delinquency charges and traffic citations. The Clerk's Office collects payments for bonds, court costs, filing fees, fines, and restitution. The Juvenile Clerk's Office strives to meet the needs of the public while working with law enforcement, defense counsel, and prosecuting attorneys to help ensure that the overall mission of the Juvenile Court is met.

Cases filed in 2023

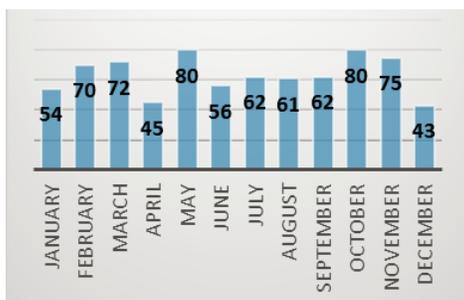
Delinquency
491 total



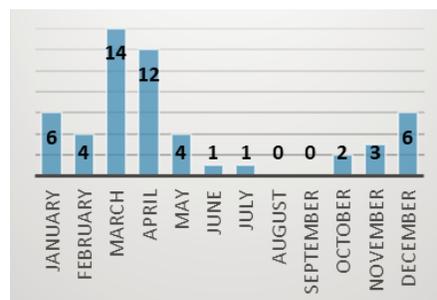
Unruly
112 total



Traffic
760 total

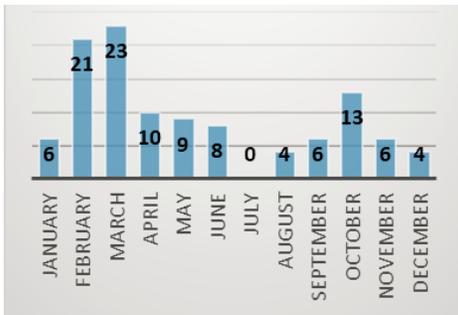


Adult
53 total



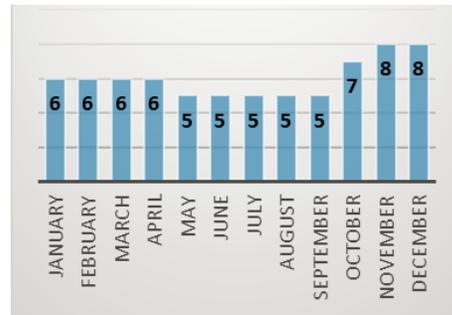
Abuse / Neglect / Dependency

110 total



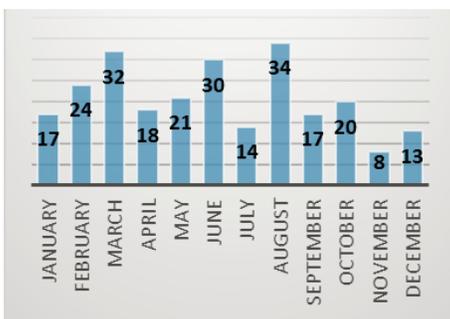
Permanent Custody

72 total



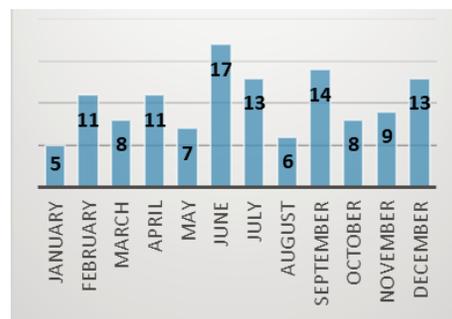
Custody

248 total



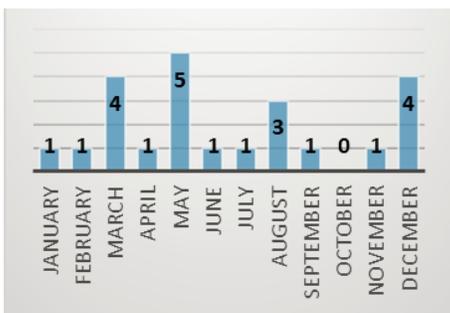
Support

122 total



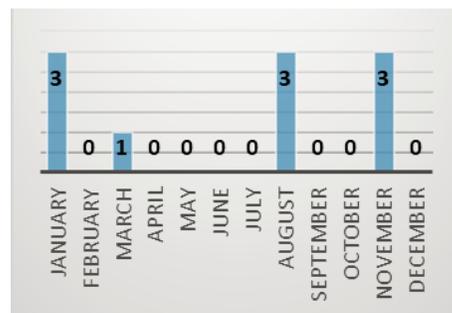
Father / Child

23 total



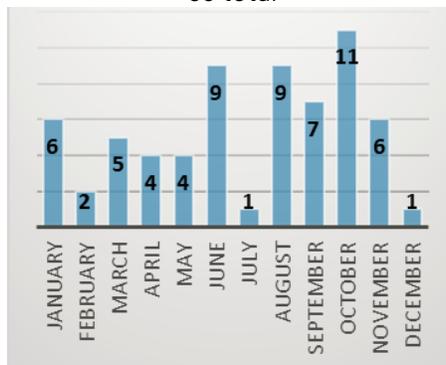
Uniform Reciprocal Enforcement of Support Act

10 total



All Other Case Types

65 total

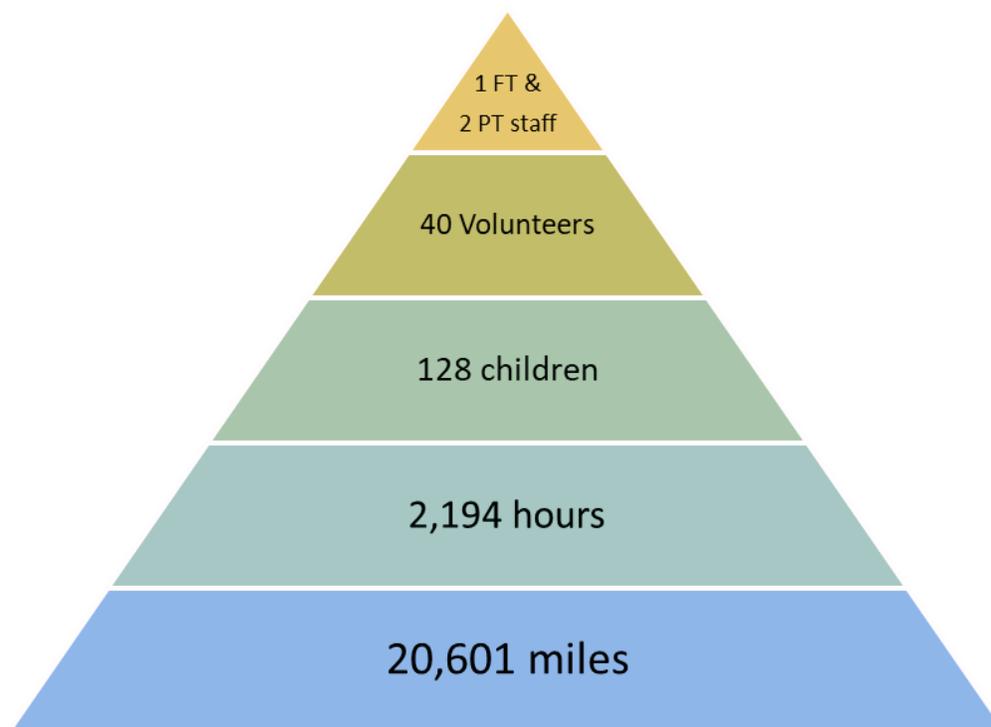


COURT-APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE PROGRAM (CASA)

2023 In Review

One fulltime and two part-time CASA staff supported 40 CASA volunteers who advocated for 128 children from 75 families whose cases were before the court for a reason of abuse / neglect / dependency.

The number of cases in 2023 was up 20% from 2022, but still down 20% from 2019, or pre-pandemic levels. Four new CASA volunteers joined the program in 2023.



CASA Activities

CASA volunteers visited each child at least once a month.

They worked 2,194 hours and drove over 20,600 miles to advocate for the children.

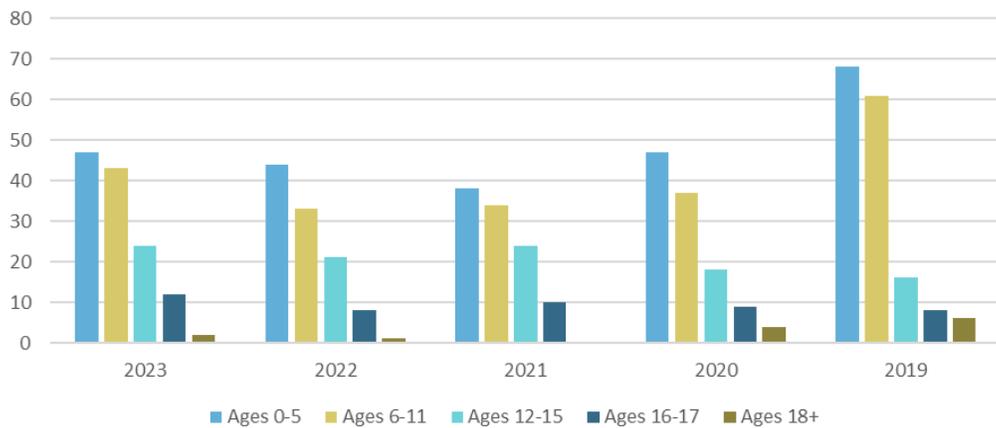
CASA volunteers wrote 156 CASA reports for court hearings.

They represented the child's best interest in 260 hearings.

CASA volunteers completed over 640 hours of continuing education.

CASA Case Information

Demographics by Age



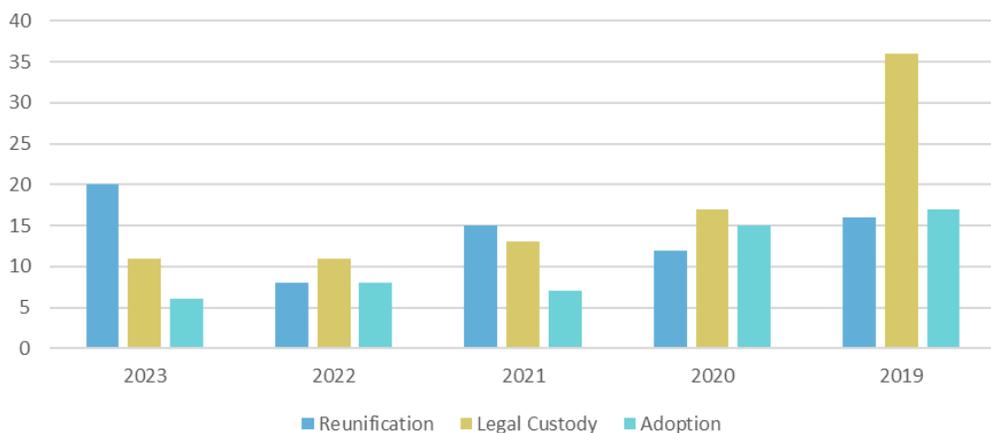
Of the 128 children served in 2023, 37% were under the age of 5.

The children in this age group are potentially at higher risk of abuse, neglect, and dependency since they are not able to self-report, and they are typically not engaged in outside services.

Substance abuse was a major factor for at least one parent in 62% of open cases.

In 2023, the average length of an AND case (Abuse, Neglect, Dependency) was 14.3 months. These cases require a long commitment from the CASA volunteer. More volunteers are needed, as 50 children were not able to be served by CASA.

Outcomes



40 children had their cases closed in 2023, and the top 3 outcomes were as follows:

28% were placed in the legal custody of relative/kinship providers

50% were reunified with their families

15% were adopted

JUVENILE PROBATION DEPARTMENT

The Warren County Juvenile Probation Department endeavors to hold juveniles accountable for delinquent behavior and in so doing, provides resources that lower criminal behavior and maintains responsible behavior which allows them to be productive in a safe community. The Juvenile Probation Department identifies the juvenile's delinquent behaviors by using analytical data to reduce the risk of the juvenile reoffending.

The Warren County Juvenile Court employs 12 probation staff. This staff includes one Chief Probation Officer, 2 Probation Managers, 1 Intake Officer, and 8 Probation Officers.

Supervision Types and Statistics

Pre-Trial Supervision: Provided to youth while their case is pending with the Court. This could include house arrest/GPS supervision, drug screening, and curfew monitoring.

Truancy Supervision: This type of supervision entails consistent contact with the school/youth and assisting youth/families with addressing attendance barriers. Our Court also offers focused docket time specific to Truancy as well as an intensive ATTEND docket where youth and families that are deemed eligible attend at least monthly hearings to address truancy. In 2017, House Bill 410 was enacted which brought about significant changes including alternatives to truancy charges being filed with the Court. Our truancy staff work collaboratively with the Warren County Educational Service Center and each school district to promote school attendance. During the 2022-2023 school year hundreds of intervention meetings/plans were completed by schools to get students back on track with attendance and avoid formal charges. There were 100 habitual truancy complaints filed with our Court during the 2022-2023 school year and 106 charges of failure to send on parents. Of those one hundred youth cases filed, sixty six youth cases were referred to our truancy diversion program as an alternative to adjudication under R.C. 2151.27(G). Forty-nine (74%) of those cases successfully completed alternatives to adjudication. Seven cases were unsuccessful and referred back to the Court for formal processing while 10 cases were closed for other reasons.

Diversion Supervision: There were a total of 59 youth who were placed in the Diversion Program in 2023, including Youth Court Respondents. Pursuant to

Ohio Rules of Juvenile Procedure 9 and Warren County Local Rule 11, if the best interest of a child and public require, cases may be referred to unofficial status and the child subject to the complaint referred to Diversion, in lieu of formal court action. Successful completion of Diversion will result in dismissal of the complaint.

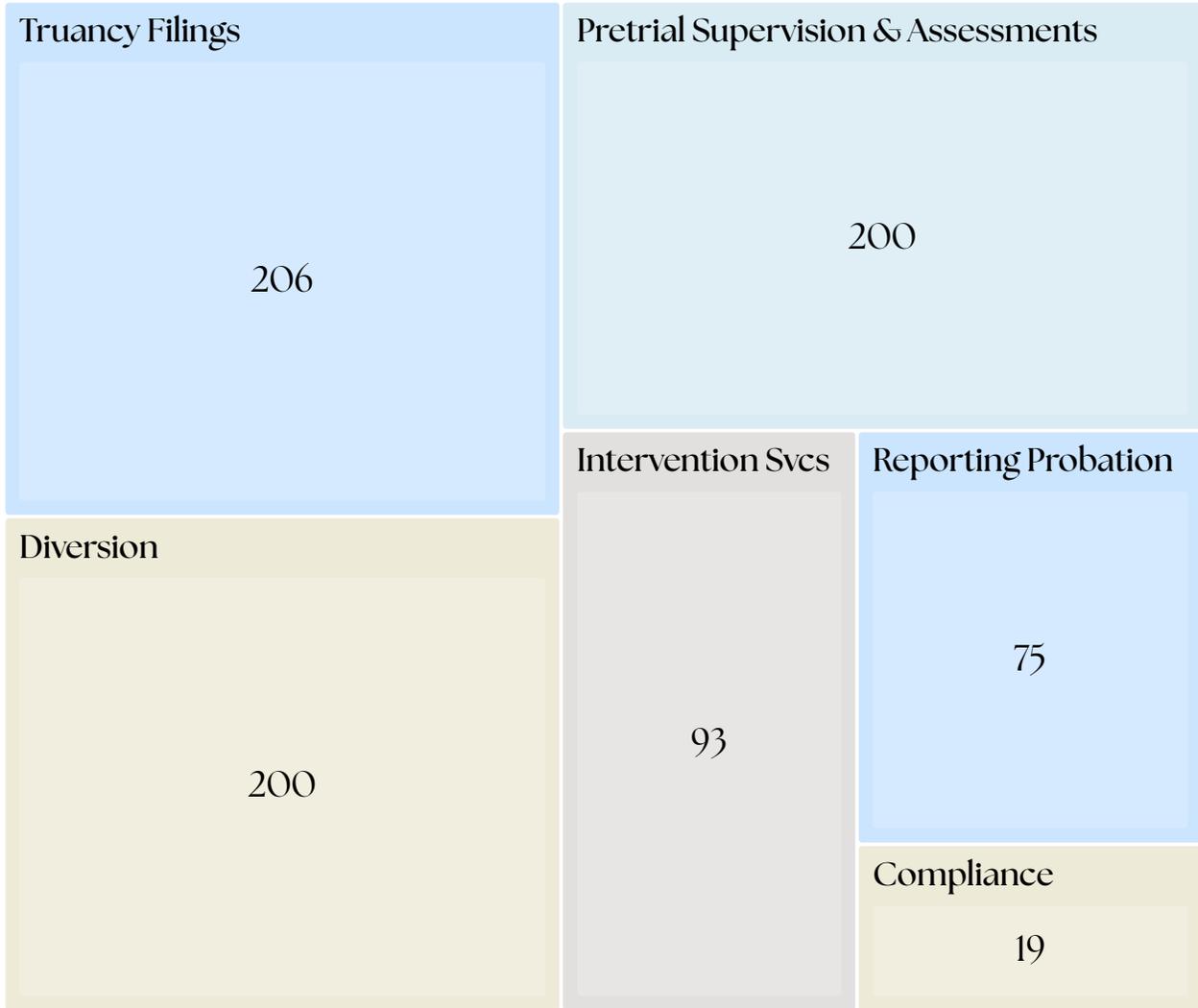
Youth Court: In our third year of Youth Court, 19 youth have successfully participated in the student-ran Youth Court Program. Youth Court is a component of Diversion Supervision and is further detailed later in this report

Compliance Supervision: There were a total of 19 youth who were placed on compliance supervision, which is a less intense model of supervision. A compliance hearing is scheduled at the original court hearing to give the family a timeline in which court orders and services should be completed.

Intervention Services (New in 2023): There were a total of 93 youth placed on Intervention Services. The mission of Intervention Services is to serve low- to moderate-risk level youth who are adjudicated on nonviolent offenses. These services will include the use of evidence-based assessments and family interviews to identify youth/family strengths and subsequently linking them with necessary services and providing them opportunities for pro-social relationships and activities. It is a short-term intervention program that is individualized to the youth/family's needs.

Reporting Probation: There were 75 new reporting probation cases, which is the most involved type of supervision. It requires the youth have frequent contact with a Probation Officer and/or Court Staff. Contact can be in the form of office visits, home visits, school visits, and/or phone calls. Formal terms of probation are filed with the Court with this type of supervision. A risk assessment is completed with all youth and an individualized case plan is created. All probation staff use strength-based practices with youth as well as evidence-based models including Carey Guides to assist in helping youth make better decisions.

Probation Department Case Loads



The Diversion case load includes the following:

141 truancy cases

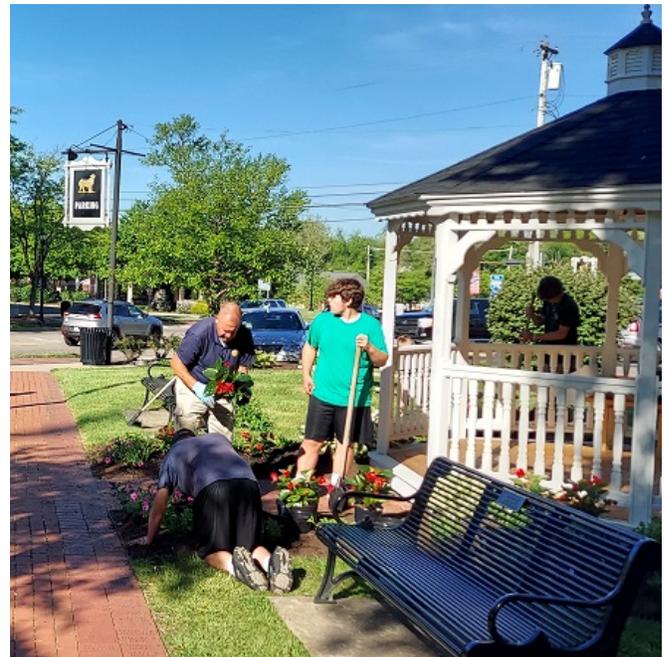
59 delinquency cases (19 of which were sanctioned through Youth Court)

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Youth who are involved with Warren County Juvenile Court, on varied levels, are afforded the opportunity to complete service hours within our community. Partnerships have been established with willing and generous organizations throughout Warren and adjacent counties. Building relationships with members of the community is one of the many benefits gained from this program.

Warren County youth have assisted community members at a variety of locations including parks, schools, shelters, religious organizations, law enforcement departments, senior living centers, and humane societies, to list a few. The youth receive credit for the hours of service completed while learning and growing from the experiences. In addition to the constructive impact our youth receive, the community is exposed to the value and potential our youth possess.

The collaboration appears to be positively resonating with all involved! Youth involved with our Court participated in 137 scheduled community service events in 2023. Collectively, the youth completed 357 hours while under Court staff supervision. Other hours were independently completed by youth. Service locations included: Lebanon, Franklin, Mason, Waynesville, Carlisle, Harveysburg, Morrow, South Lebanon, Springboro, Maineville, Landen, Corwin, Loveland, Sharonville, and Blue Ash.



YOUTH COURT PROGRAM

Warren County Juvenile Court has been operating Youth Court since 2021. It provides Warren County high school students with the opportunity to experience the inner workings of the Juvenile Justice System by participating as a Judge, Bailiff, Prosecutor, Defense Attorney, and Jurors.

The program engages high school youth volunteers to help peers who have committed delinquency acts. These youth volunteers hear real cases and render real consequences.

“It is an opportunity for a youth to right a wrong and to hold the offender accountable to the victim and the community,” said Judge Kirby, “and at the same time providing our youth volunteers with a unique introduction to the court system.”

Adults and youth volunteers work as colleagues to achieve the goals of restoring justice to victims, the defendants, and the community. Consequences in these cases may include options such as educational classes specific to the respondent’s behavior, community service, research projects, or paying restitution to a victim.

The benefits of a Youth Court can be significant. Youth respondents learn there are consequences for their actions and these consequences are decided by a jury of their peers, as well as youth volunteers learn about due process, responsibility, and justice.

In December 2023, the Court collaborated with a student from Mason High School to record a mock session of Youth Court. It is the Court’s intention to use that video for promotional purposes as well as to assist other courts that are interested in setting up their own Youth Court.

Due to the success of Youth Court, Warren County Juvenile Court has been invited to Columbus in the Spring of 2024 to speak about the viability of utilizing the program in other counties in Ohio.

Still Shots of the Youth Court Video



Warren County Youth Court uses youth volunteers to portray all courtroom positions, including the Judge.



Youth stand at the podium to provide opening and closing statements as well as to question witnesses.



Adult volunteers are present to provide guidance to youth volunteers throughout each portion of the session as needed.



The jury is also made up of youth volunteers who deliberate over sanctions to be imposed upon the Respondent.

JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER

The Warren County Juvenile Detention Center is a two-pod, 24-bed single occupancy facility with one additional holding cell. It is designed for short-term stays where a delinquent child may be held while they await court action or sentencing. The daily operations are overseen by one superintendent, 22 correctional staff, and a mental health clinician – all employed by the Juvenile Court.

In addition to the living areas, the detention center has a classroom, medical room, interview rooms, and a gymnasium. The Warren County Juvenile Detention Center has fostered a working relationship with a number of businesses and nonprofits to help the children temporarily housed in our facility to continue their academic pursuits, maintain physical fitness, improve their mental health, and to put the children on a successful path after they leave.

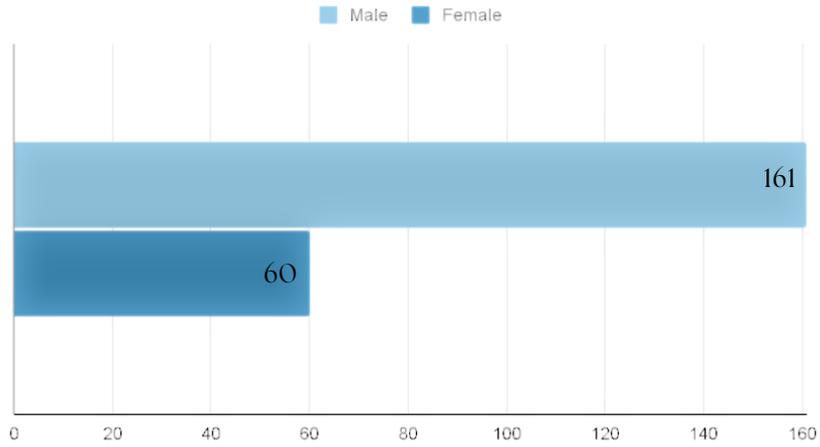
The companies and nonprofits we have partnered with include our local Educational Service Center, Aramark, Vital Core, Focus on Youth, and several local churches. These partnerships create a strong community base and provide excellent services for the children in detention. Some of the services provided by these partnerships include:

- Tutoring
- Rewards
- Improved food quality
- 24-hour medical and mental health coverage
- Alternative Treatment Program (ATP)
- Alternatives to Detention Program (ATD)
- Community service, both inside and outside the facility grounds
- New exercise equipment
- Religious services

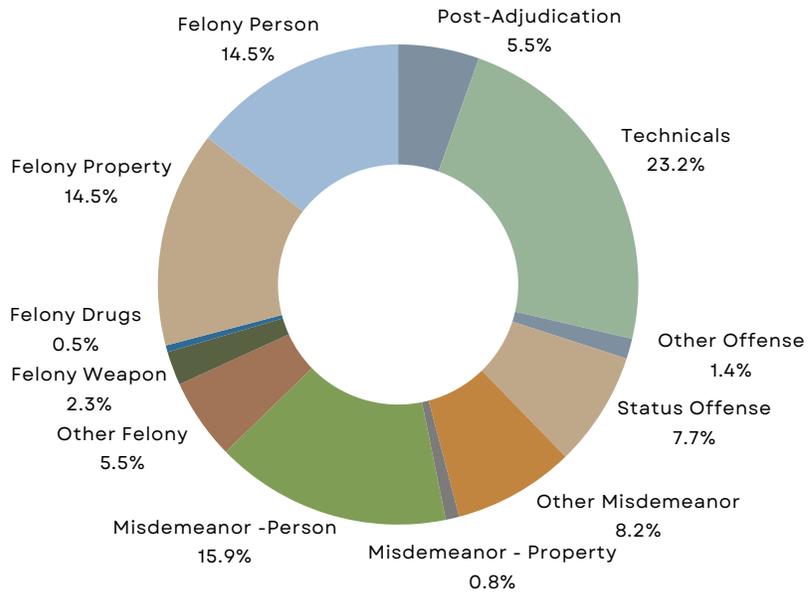
Studies have shown that programs of this type, particularly physical fitness programs, have helped with the children's behavior while in detention, along with assisting with their physical and mental health.

Statistics for the year are detailed on the following page.

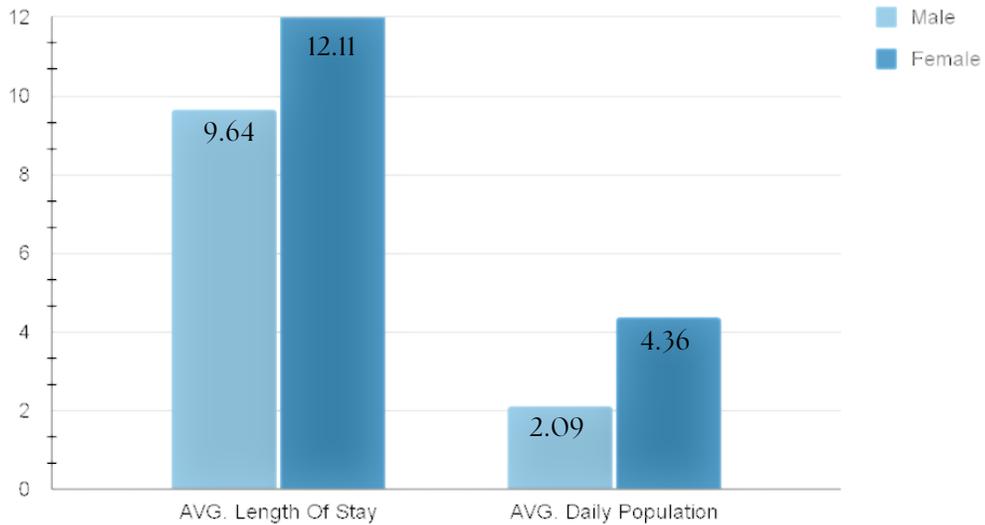
Total Number of Juveniles Admitted



Offenses



JDC Overview



MARY HAVEN YOUTH CENTER

Residential Treatment: Behavior Modification Program

Mary Haven Youth Center bases its milieu on the evidence-based Circle of Courage programming. The Circle of Courage programming fosters resilience, motivation, and capacity building among youth who have been marginalized. The program is designed specifically to enhance the four foundations of self esteem (significance, competence, power, and virtue). This programming connects with troubled youth in positive ways to help them build emotional and social efficacy in addition to strategies that improve teacher/learner relationships.

Juvenile Sex Offender Program

Those youth adjudicated on a sexual offense will also participate in the Circle of Courage program in addition to their treatment specific to problematic sexual behaviors. These youth will be required to participate in an initial, full-disclosure treatment polygraph and assessment. Six months after the initial polygraph, the resident will be required to pass a maintenance polygraph to determine their level of honesty, non-offending behavior, and progress in treatment. At that time, they may be eligible for review by the Court.

SOS (Support. Opportunity. Success.)

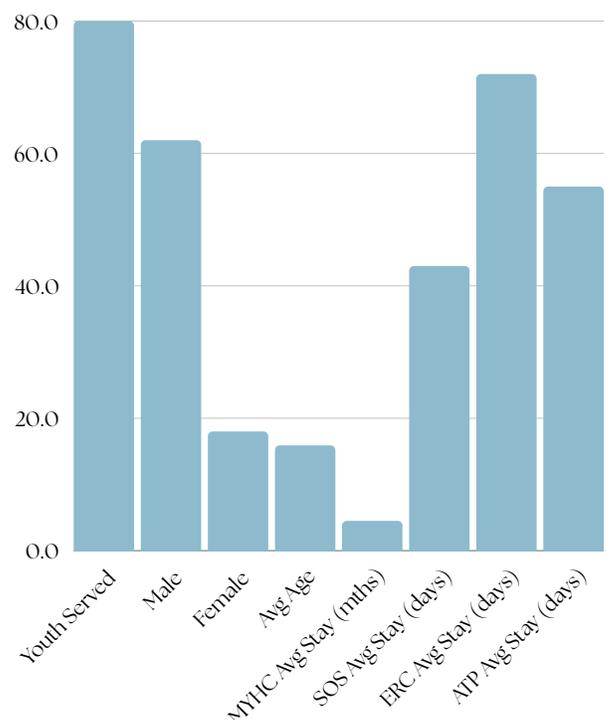
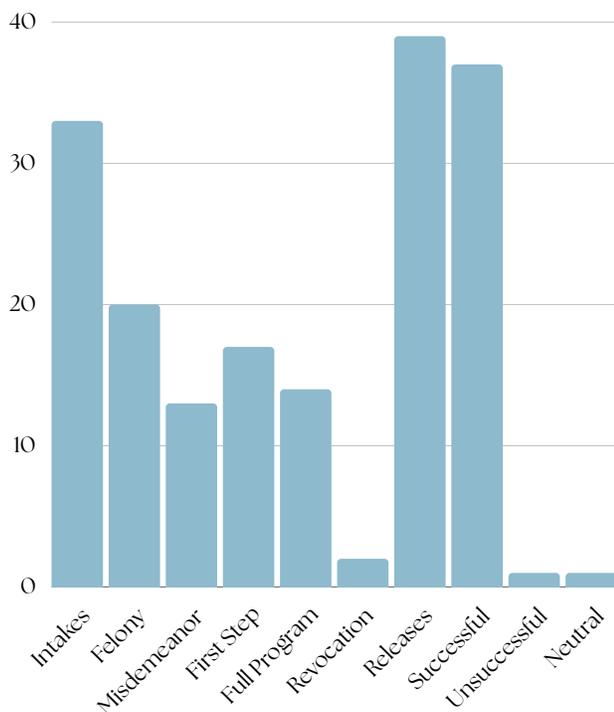
SOS is a day program designed as a partnership between Warren County Juvenile Court and schools throughout Warren County. The SOS school program in Mary Haven Youth Center will SUPPORT court-involved students by providing an OPPORTUNITY to continue their education and stay on track towards a SUCCESSful graduation. Alongside their school curriculum, youth in the program receive group treatment designed to address independent living skills, anger management, and drug and alcohol concerns. Time in the program is dependent on the youth's ability to successfully transition back into their home school.

ERC (Evening Reporting Center)

The Evening Reporting Center is designed to be a prevention-based educational program. The program was established as an alternative to detention for youth who are served by the Warren County Juvenile Court. The ERC program engages youth in a series of active learning groups. The current program utilizes the Aggression Replacement Training program (ART), the Life Skills program, and a group with focus on preventative drug and alcohol curriculum. The youth also receive homework assistance daily. Youth are provided an after-school snack, as well as a balanced, nutritious dinner. This program has been an asset to the youth served, the community, and probation.

ATP (Alternative Treatment Program)

Alternative Treatment Program was designed to support Warren County girls and their families towards more positive engagement in the community and within the home. Youth are assessed for residential needs and the Court determines who may be placed in the program. The program offers a First Step and Full Program. While in the program, the girls receive weekly individual and family therapy. They may also have treatment-specific sessions based on their treatment plan needs, i.e., drug and alcohol treatment and trauma-specific treatment. The girls also engage in a series of prevention-based interventions using evidence-based “Voices,” which is a curriculum of self-discovery and empowerment for girls.



MARY HAVEN YOUTH CENTER: HORTICULTURE PROGRAM

In 2023, Mary Haven's horticulture program sustained its commitment to community engagement through annual plant sales and outreach initiatives.

The groundwork for the 2023 spring sale event commenced early in the year, as residents transplanted nearly 5,000 plants and nurtured various vegetable varieties from seed. Residents also cultivated and sold 10 different tomato and pepper varieties from seed, and we added house plants to our diverse selection.

Crafting endeavors during the winter months led to additional revenue for the spring sale. Early shoppers received free seed grab bags, provided by the local Rural King. A bake sale and a bagged lunch were also offered during the event. The Lebanon Public Library donated 3D printed flowerpots which were included in a raffle for participants to win one with the purchase of a bagged lunch during our spring flower sale.

Building on our commitment to community service, residents participated in landscaping projects with Gordon Lewis at the TCU courtyard on the Otterbein retirement campus. At the conclusion of our flower sale in the spring and the mum sale in the fall, we donated potted plants and mums to Otterbein to further enrich public spaces and bring joy to the residents.

In 2024, our primary goal is to expand community outreach initiatives, fostering deeper connections and making a positive impact in the areas we serve. Additionally, we aim to enhance sustainability practices within our programs, striving for more eco-friendly solutions in our horticultural endeavors.



A few of the items
available from the
Spring 2023
Plant Sale

A selection of the
mums available
from the
Fall 2023 Sale



