

Court Expands Pro Se Legal Services with Capital University Family & Youth Law Center

Coshocton County Juvenile Court will expand legal services through an agreement signed with Capital University's Family and Youth Law Center. The expansion will allow for clients that qualify based on income guidelines to get additional assistance beyond what the Court's brief advice legal clinic currently is able to offer.

Anticipated Juvenile Court related services from Capital will include: a phone help line, an online database for information related to Coshocton Juvenile Court's forms and process, and law student assistance on completing paperwork related to more complicated case filings than can be addressed at the monthly brief advice clinics. It is anticipated that clients to be served will have already attended the local brief advice legal clinic, but significant issues surrounding their case and time restrictions would limit local attorney's ability to address these at the brief advice clinic.

When Judge Van Blanchard II and Coshocton County Juvenile Court developed the local "Family Law Clinic" in July of 2016, the focus was for clients with limited income to get extra assistance and brief legal advice from local attorneys on proper filing of paperwork in civil matters handled through the Court of Common Pleas, General Division and Juvenile Division. To date, 129 clients have been served through 16 sessions, leading to increased access and improved quality of filing for both Courts.

At the brief legal advice clinic, local attorneys help the Courts and clients with more accurate filings, suggestions on how court process works and informational flyers also contribute to client needs when tackling difficult paperwork and procedures. Southeastern Ohio Legal Services has supported the clinics by tracking volunteer attorney hours for training credit, qualifying eligible participants and taking surveys on how to improve clinics and satisfaction of clients receiving advice.

While Judge Blanchard is enthusiastic about this new opportunity to provide enhanced legal services for court clients, he also stressed the importance of continued brief advice clinics with local attorneys which serves both local courts handling civil family matters. "It is important to continue this local clinic so all court clients have access to advice on local issues and court processes, and to ensure that access to justice and changes in society are met with improved techniques in today's self-serve world."