



**JUVENILE AND
PROBATE COURT**

SENECA COUNTY

2018 Annual Report

Judge Jay A. Meyer

An exciting year for the courts and the public we serve.

It has been an honor and privilege to serve the citizens of Seneca County as Judge of the Juvenile and Probate Court. I was elected in the fall of 2008 and my first day on the bench was February 9, 2009.

I am extremely proud of the positive impact of the Courts. The decisions of the bench and the support of a dedicated staff allows for protection of the community and offender accountability.

As Judge, I have the responsibility for administering the many and varied functions of the Courts and Seneca County Youth Center. With both part and full time employment, the Court employs approximately 52 individuals. The Court operates out of 4 different locations. The Youth Center is a 24 hour a day, 7 day a week facility and the Probation Officers and Public Guardian are on call 24/7.



My staff and I consistently and carefully evaluate all of our services and responsibilities with a goal of effective stewardship of the resources available. I pledge to continue our dedicated efforts to keep our costs down while providing excellent services to our citizens.

Juvenile and Probate Courts are required by law to provide specific services. The Courts are 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.”

2018 has been an exciting year for the Courts. Most important, with the support and vision of the Seneca County Commissioners, we moved from our longtime home in the Carnegie Library to the Seneca County Justice Center. Please walk down memory lane with us in the pages that follow.

**I invite you to review this report and also our website at www.senecajpcourt.com
If you have additional questions, please call. You will find phone numbers on our website.**

Respectfully

Judge Jay A. Meyer

108 Jefferson Street



Home of Seneca County Juvenile Court from the late 1970's until October 23, 2018

108 Jefferson Street was built in 1912-13 with funding provided by the Carnegie Foundation for a library in Tiffin. A central figure that worked to secure funding from Andrew Carnegie was the Honorable J. F. Bunn, former Judge of the Probate Court and president of the Library Board at that time.

The entire project cost to build the library in 1912 was \$23,981.40. This included the building, architects fees and furniture. The new library building was occupied in September of 1913. Tiffin was one of the more than 2,000 Carnegie Libraries constructed in the United States.

A new Tiffin-Seneca Library was built in 1975-76 and 108 Jefferson Street was purchased by the Seneca County Commissioners for \$100,000.00. The building was remodeled and became the new home for Seneca County Juvenile and Probate Court.

As time wore on, the 1912 structure began having difficulty serving the updated and evolving needs of the public. The Courts needed more space and handicap accessibility to address the needs of the community.

103 East Market Street



October 23, 2018 - New home of Seneca County Juvenile and Probate Court

In 2018 the Seneca County Justice Center was complete and the occupants of what was formerly called the “Annex” moved into the new portion of the facility. After some minor renovation, The Juvenile and Probate Courts moved into the annex section of the Justice Center and opened to the public on October 23, 2018. Through thoughtful planning, public services were not interrupted during the move.

We are grateful to the Commissioners for supporting the move into our new space and we are thrilled to be a part of the Seneca County Justice Center.

Seneca County Justice Center



2018 Home to all Tiffin and Seneca County Courts and the Clerk of Courts

Teresa Copp – Court Administrator
Tracy Kerschner – Administrative Clerk

JUVENILE COURT

PROBATE COURT

Beth Brown – Chief Deputy Clerk/Bailiff

Dana Eborg – Chief Deputy Clerk

Linda Frank – Deputy Clerk

Amy Littlejohn – Deputy Clerk

Jenny Harris – Deputy Clerk

Samantha Gruss/Tiffany Corfman – Deputy Clerk/
Investigator

MeKenna Klaiss– Deputy Clerk

Nicole Fretz – Deputy Clerk/ Investigator

Cathy Bean– Deputy Clerk

Beverly Foos – Public Guardian

Karis Tyree/Chloe Seislove – Deputy Clerk

Cherie Anderson – Part-Time Records Clerk

The Bench

The Honorable *Judge Jay A. Meyer* was elected by Seneca County Voters to serve as their Juvenile and Probate Judge in 2008 and re-elected in 2014. 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

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 exceeding Ohio Supreme Court requirements as established under Rule 16.

Ms. Cavanaugh successfully mediated 33 truancy mediations for the 2017-18 school year and 7 civil cases in 2018.



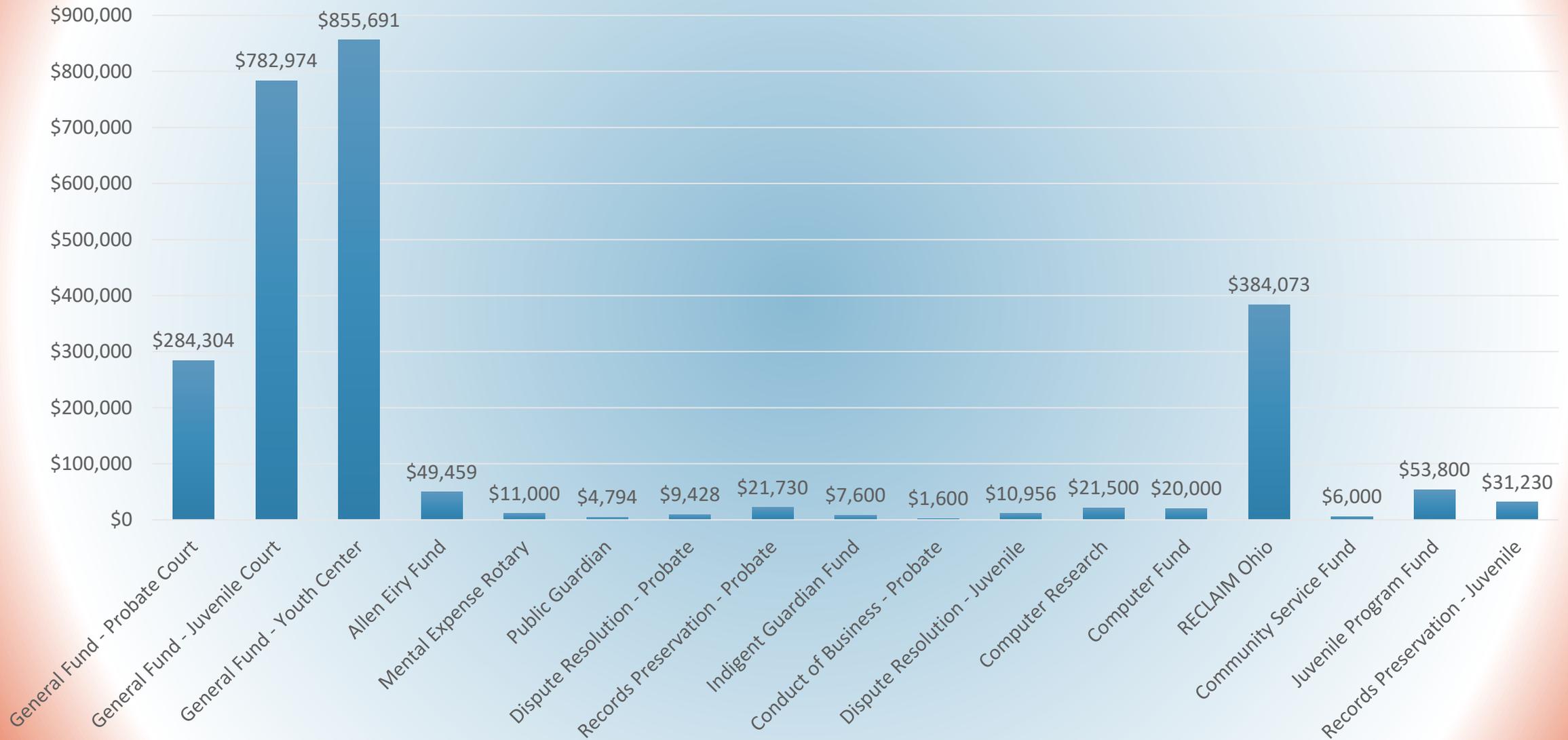
Magistrate

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

2018 Court Appropriations

General Fund; Grant Funds; Court Funds – Total \$2,499,991



PROBATE COURT

Under 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 is the Judge for both Seneca County Probate and Juvenile Court.



Probate Court Case Breakdown - 2018

	OPEN	CLOSED
MARRIAGE LICENSES ISSUED =	293	
Estates	294	343
Minor Guardianships	2	1
Incompetent Guardianships	15	25
Trusts	2	3
Civil	16	24
Adoption	15	18
Mental Illness	9	10
Minor Settlement	4	4
Name Change	31	30
Conservatorship	0	0
Wrongful Death	0	0
Delayed Birth Registration	6	6
TOTAL	394	464

Probate Court Year in Review



Projects implemented/completed during the year:

- Probate Court moved into the Seneca County Justice Center.
- Following the sale by the Seneca County Commissioners of the **81 Jefferson Street** property, older Probate Court records that were stored in the building were moved to another county property. 81 Jefferson Street was then demolished to make way for National Corner.
- A draft of updated Probate Court Local Rules were completed in 2018 to take effect in 2019.

Goals for 2019:

- Continuation of the preservation of Probate records through imaging and/or microfilm.
- Completion of the Guardianship Handbook.

Seneca County Guardianship Program

- The **Seneca County Guardianship Program** provides guardianship and conservatorship assistance to indigent incompetent elderly. This life maintaining and life sustaining program would not be possible without the generous grant funding provided by the Allen Eiry Fund.
- The Allen Eiry Fund was created in 1983 through The Columbus Foundation in Mr. Eiry's name for the benefit of elderly citizens in Seneca County. The local Allen Eiry Advisory Committee consists of 5 individuals, 2 of which are appointed by the Seneca County Probate Court. On behalf of the seniors that are served, the Court thanks the Foundation and the local Allen Eiry Committee members.
- Modified Superintendence Rule 66 implemented by the Supreme Court of Ohio went into effect June 1, 2015. The new rule significantly impacts guardianship training requirements. All guardians of adults are now required to receive six (6) hours of fundamental training followed by three (3) hours of continuing education each year thereafter, unless exempt by the Seneca County Probate Local Rule 66.

History of the Allen Eiry Fund ... Mr. Allen Eiry passed away in 1974 at the age of 80. He never married and was remembered for his eccentricities of living in a run-down house with second-hand linoleum on the floors and mooching meals and laundry services off his neighbors. He minded his own business and worked as an automobile dealer. He was an investor in various properties and in a pipeline operation in the County.



Mr. Eiry remembered his friends living at the “poor farm”, the Seneca County Home, and visited regularly. He left an estate valued at \$1,000,000.00 to be used for the benefit of the residents of the Seneca County Home. When the home closed in 1986, income generated by the estate funds were distributed to eligible tax-exempt applicants that had programs to benefit county residents who would have possibly been county home residents.

Judge Gerald D. Meyer, father of Judge Jay A. Meyer, recognized the need for a guardianship program for the elderly in Seneca County and implemented the program in 1987 with the help of Allen Eiry funds. Since 1987, the Seneca County Public Guardian program has received \$1,139,500.00 from the generosity of the Allen Eiry estate.

The Program has grown over the years and now provides 24-hour, 7-day a week on call guardianship and conservatorship services to Seneca County residents over the age of 55, that are indigent and who suffer from incompetency or mental impairment and have no one in their lives that can serve in that capacity.

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 was serving as Probate Judge during this time. When the Juvenile Court System was created the Probate Judge assumed responsibility over Juvenile Court as well. At age 29 he was the youngest judge to be elected as Seneca County Probate Judge. He served as Judge from 1903-1909.

Juvenile Court Cases - 2018

	FILED	CONCLUDED
Delinquent	301	308
Traffic	227	238
Abuse/Neglect/Dependent	42	48
Unruly	33	32
Adult	30	33
Permanent Custody	0	3
Change of Custody	189	213
Support Modification	519	514
Parentage	8	7
UIFSA	2	0
Other	22	23
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>1373</i>	<i>1421</i>

Juvenile Court Year in Review



Projects implemented/completed during the year:

- Juvenile Court moved into the Seneca County Justice Center.
- Following the sale by the Seneca County Commissioners of the **81 Jefferson Street** property, older Juvenile Court records that were stored in the building were moved to another county property. 81 Jefferson Street was then demolished to make way for National Corner.
- Juvenile Court has reduced its paper records in juvenile delinquency and unruliness actions by scanning and if applicable, sealing and expunging.

Goals for 2019:

- Process of E-Citations submitted by Ohio State Highway Patrol.
- Hire a part-time records clerk to continue the process of scanning older records; sealing and expunging.
- Reduce paper records in paternity actions by ensuring a good readable docket where the juvenile of the action has attained the age of 23.

Juvenile Court Initiatives

THE MISSION OF THE SENECA COUNTY

FAMILY INTERVENTION COURT:

- Is to prepare Seneca County Juveniles to lead healthy, responsible and productive lives by eliminating drug and alcohol abuse and coping appropriately with mental illness.
- This is a four phase program. A participants progression through the program is based upon their performance in the treatment plan and compliance with the phases.
- The Supreme Court of Ohio has certified the Family Intervention Court as a Specialized Docket.
- Parents must cooperate and agree to participate in the program.
- Successful participants benefit from a clean and sober lifestyle, improved familial and social relationships and an overall healthier lifestyle.

JUVENILE COURT INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Seneca County Juvenile Court works closely with area higher education institutions to provide internship opportunities to qualified students.

In 2018, *two students* logged 300 *hours* as part of the Juvenile Court Internship Program. The students that completed these hours were from Tiffin University.



Court Services

Vacant	Probation Officer
Linda Cohen*	Probation Officer
Jason French	Probation Officer
Jay Rishty	Probation Officer
Jim Jarrett*	Probation Officer
Kendra Shearer	Diversion Officer
Miranda Samsal	Community Service/Restitution
*Paid by General Fund	

The Court Services Department helps to connect youth and families with interventions and services available in our community as soon as they make contact with the Court, and it continues to do so throughout the youth's involvement with the Court. Court Services houses and coordinates the:

- Probation Program
- Diversion Program
- Community Service/Restitution Program

Seneca County Juvenile Court endeavors to achieve a balance of community protection, imposition of accountability, and the development of skills and competencies necessary to improve family functions. The Court's approach involves basic balanced and restorative justice principles, as well as evidence-based practices and interventions that measure risk, intervention, quality, efficiency and outcomes. Our community has a right to be safe and secure. To achieve a safe community, the Juvenile Court focuses its attention on prevention, supervision and control.

The Court believes in and operates in accordance with the principle of the least restrictive setting required to protect the community. This principle, supported by outcome measures and a large volume of research suggests that the more restrictive settings 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 so as to create the appropriate balance of accountability and assistance.

Court Services

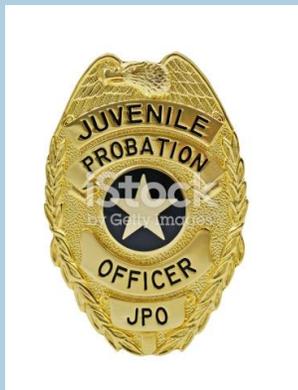
The Department of Court Services is largely funded by RECLAIM Ohio.

WHAT IS RECLAIM OHIO?

RECLAIM stands for

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

It 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.

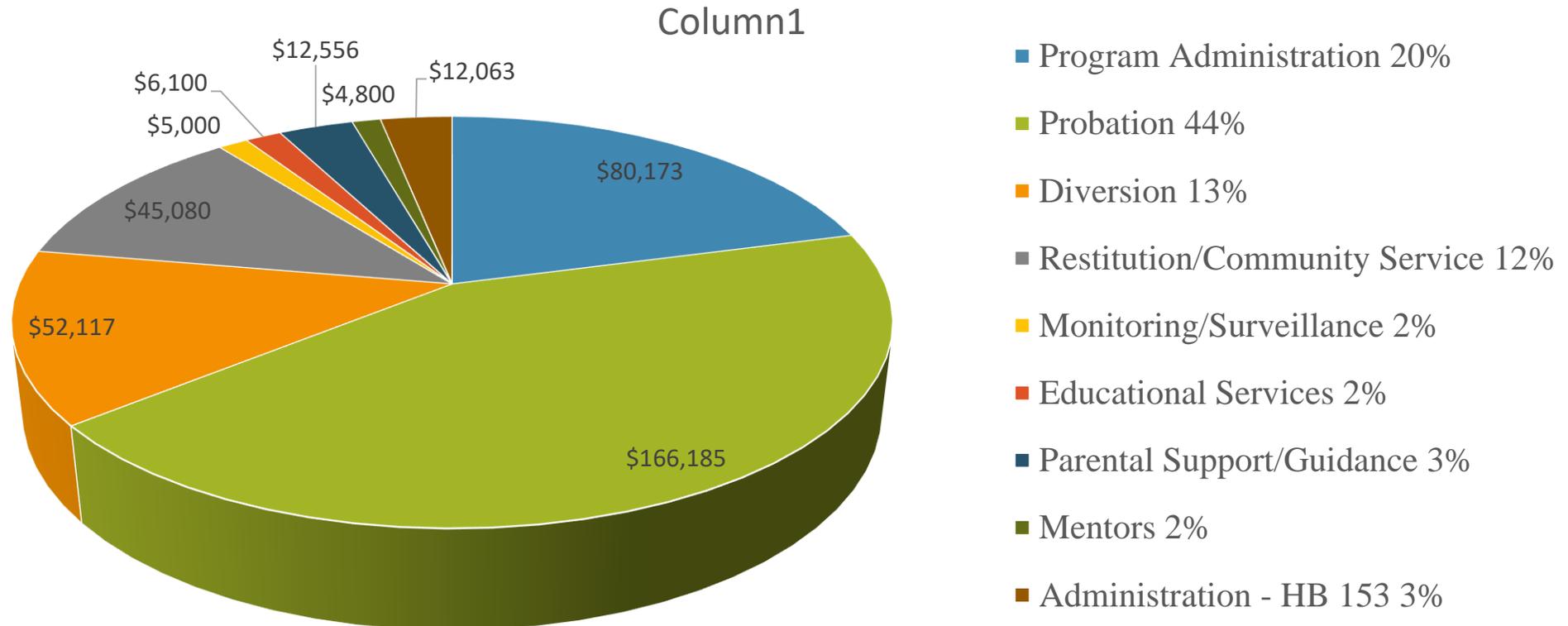


RECLAIM Grant funds pay for the following programs:

- Program Administration
- Probation
- Educational Services
- Strengthening Families Program
- Restitution/Community Service
- Monitoring/Surveillance
- Diversion
- Triangle Youth Mentoring Program

HOW WE USED OUR RECLAIM GRANT FUNDS IN 2018	
<p>Program Administration:</p>	<p>Used to pay for 80% of the Director of Court services salary and 60% of administrative clerk salary. HB 153 funding was allocated to the Court in 2018. The funding was used to provided training in Motivational Interviewing and quality assurance for Court Services employees.</p>
<p>Probation: <i>*Funds provide the salaries of 3 full-time Probation Officers and 20% time of a 4th Probation Officer</i> <i>*Served 170 adjudicated youth in FY 2018</i></p>	<p>Used to provide supervision and case management of adjudicated youth with the goal of reducing subsequent delinquent behavior. Cumulative research indicates that individuals most likely to reoffend should be provided with intensive resources rather than placed in secure detention. Seneca County Juvenile Court uses the research-based Ohio Youth Assessment System (OYAS) to determine the risk level for reoffending.</p>
<p>Community Service/Restitution <i>*Funds provide the salary of 1 full-time Officer</i> <i>*Served 215 adjudicated youth in FY 2018</i></p>	<p>This program addresses youth that are in need of completing court ordered restitution and community service hours</p>
<p>Monitoring/Surveillance: <i>*Served 34 adjudicated youth in FY 2018</i></p>	<p>This program uses ankle monitors to closely track youth who require intensive supervision, and an alternative to detention.</p>
<p>Educational Services: <i>*Served 20 adjudicated youth in FY 2018</i></p>	<p>The PACE program targets youth that are struggling in school by providing contracted tutoring services through Heidelberg University</p>
<p>Diversion: <i>*Served 48 youth in FY 2018</i></p>	<p>Used to deliver informal supervision to first-time offenders in hopes of helping them avoid an official court hearing</p>
<p><i>Mentors:</i> <i>*Served 14 youth in FY 2018</i></p>	<p>The Triangle Mentoring Program provided through the YMCA was designed to assist youth in focusing on self cognitive awareness, general life skills, enhanced social skills, and physical activity.</p>
<p><i>Parental Support/ Guidance:</i> <i>*Served 15 youth and their families in FY 2018</i></p>	<p>Partnering with Firelands and the YMCA the Seneca County Family Fulfillment Program provides the youth and families the evidence based program Strengthening Families along with youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility.</p>

RECLAIM Ohio Total FY 2018 Budget - \$384,073.84



Community Service/ Restitution

- As part of the Community Service/ Restitution Program, Seneca County Juvenile Court offers youth an opportunity to participate in a **Work Program**. The **Work Program** allows the youth owing victim restitution a chance to earn an hourly credit of \$8.30 (state minimum wage) to be paid to their victim. Youth can earn up to a maximum credit of \$1,000.00.
- Since Judge Meyer took office, **more than 58,000 hours of community service have been completed by youth.**

DIVERSION PROGRAM – ORC 2151.18(B)

Seneca County Juvenile Court's Diversion Program was established to assist the Juvenile Court Judge and Magistrates by diverting unruly and delinquent offenders from a formal adjudication, with the attempt to hold the youth accountable for his/her actions and to minimize penetration into the Juvenile Justice System

The Court's Diversion Officer maintains the Diversion Program by providing an opportunity for first time, low risk, unruly/delinquent offenders to be diverted from the official court process.

In 2018: A total of 48 youth were served. 20 successfully completed, 4 unsuccessfully completed and 24 were carried over into 2019.

Of the 48 youth served: 14 were truancy cases. Of the 14 truancy cases, 2 successfully completed, 1 was unsuccessful and adjudicated and 11 were carried over into 2019.

Juvenile Court Court Habilitation Programs

- **Reality Works**
- **PACE Program**
- **4-H CARTEENS**
- **Substance Abuse & Alcohol Education**
- **Anger Management**
- **YES Shoplifting Program**
- **3rd Millennium Classroom:**
 - Respect & Resolve**
 - Marijuana 101**
 - Nicotine 101**
 - Under the Influence JV**
 - Stoplifting**
 - Conflict-Wise**
 - Parent-Wise**

4-H CARTEENS Program—
a teen facilitated traffic safety
program for first time
juvenile traffic offenders
Partnership with OSU
Extension

**Anger Management
Program** —
gives youth an opportunity
to learn strategies and
techniques to control
anger



YES Program — an education
rehabilitative program offered
to youth for first time petty
theft/shoplifting

3rd Millennium Classrooms
offers on-line courses with
evidence- based strategies for
behavior change intervention

PACE Program —
academic tutoring offered in
partnership with Heidelberg
University

**Substance Abuse & Alcohol
Education Program** —
designed to educate youth
on the harmful effects of
using drugs and consuming
alcohol

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



SENECA COUNTY YOUTH CENTER



- ❑ Construction on the 24-bed facility began on March 1st, 2012.
- ❑ The Youth Center opened its doors on February 7th, 2013. The opening allowed the county to discontinue use of the 1950's orphanage building that previously housed the Center.
- ❑ The Ohio Department of Youth Services contributed \$1,878,000.00 and Seneca County contributed \$1,252,000.00 to cover the cost of the project.

YOUTH CENTER STAFF...

Ben Yourkvitch – Director
Greg Selhorst – Operations Manager
Sarah Canalos – Program Manager
Tiffany Mercado –Administrative Manager

Other Positions Include:

2 full time Activities Supervisors

2 full time Head Supervisors

4 full time Shift Leaders

8 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

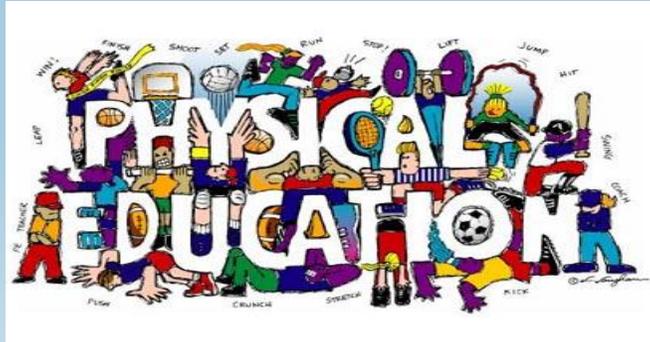
Residents have the opportunity to participate in mental health counseling during his/her time spent at the Seneca County Youth Center. Funding for the SCYC Behavioral Health Program is paid in part by local Sandusky County levy funds from Mental Health and Recovery Services Board of Seneca, Sandusky, and Wyandot Counties.

2018

Youth who received behavioral health services	Primarily MH Service Hours	Primarily AOD Service Hours	Successfully Discharged	Unsuccessfully Discharged
290	431	431	274	0

• *Along with school, youth in detention are kept 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 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



2018 Youth Center Intake Statistics

FELONY OFFENSES	56
Misdemeanor Offenses	284
Other (status, tobacco, alcohol)	10
Seneca County Intakes	196
Other County Intakes	154
Seneca County Sentencing	85
Other County Sentencing	71

Partnerships and Relationships

The Seneca County Juvenile and Probate Court have many wonderful partnerships and relationships that work together for the benefit of the residents of Seneca County.

- 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 AND WYANDOT COUNTIES
- SENECA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES
- ALL AREA SCHOOL DISTRICTS
- AREA COUNSELORS AND COUNSELING SERVICES
- HEIDELBERG UNIVERSITY
- TIFFIN UNIVERSITY
- SENECA COUNTY FAMILY AND CHILDREN FIRST COUNSEL
- 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