

**Guernsey County  
Probate/Juvenile Court & Juvenile Probation**



**Annual Report**

**2017**

## Executive Summary

The Probate and Juvenile Court are divisions of the Common Pleas Court of Guernsey County.

The Juvenile Court's mission is to provide for the education, rehabilitation, care, protection, and mental and physical development of children subject to the jurisdiction of the Court; Further, its mission is to protect the welfare of the community and the public interest by treating children as persons in need of supervision, care and rehabilitation.

The Probate Court is responsible for over two hundred separate duties. Those duties range from issuing marriage licenses to overseeing testamentary trusts valued in the millions of dollars. The Court provides the oversight of Guardianships for minors and incompetent adults. As such, the Court is the Superior Guardian to these individuals.

Both the Probate and Juvenile Courts are responsible for the welfare of the most vulnerable members of our community. The Court not only decides cases based on sound legal principles, but also must determine the best course in achieving justice for individuals, and society as a whole.

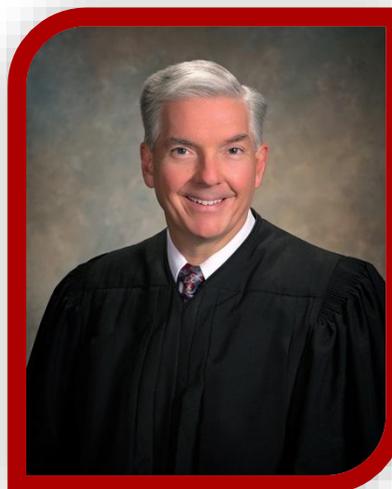
2015 saw many changes in the Court. Judge Robert S. Moorehead, Jr. retired, and I assumed the duties of Judge on February 9, 2015.

The Court also saw the retirement of our longtime Court Administrator Pam Feldner, and our Magistrate Gerald Jones. Tim Welch was hired as Court Director for the Juvenile Court Division overseeing Court Administration, as well as Juvenile Probation. In addition, Tim has been assisting the Probate Division with the Court's new Family Guardianship Program.

The Juvenile Court worked throughout 2015 to increase drug awareness in the community by joining in the sponsoring of "One Death Is One Too Many," for the middle school and high school students in Guernsey County.

The Probate Court also saw many changes in how it operates due to changes in the law, both statewide and nationally. In June of 2015, the Ohio Supreme Court enacted new Rules of Superintendence that required our local Court to establish new local rules on Guardianship. The most radical change was the request that all Guardians attend a Guardianship training course. The Court worked throughout 2015 to establish a Family Guardianship course to be enacted in 2016. The Court also was front and center in the issue of same sex marriage as a result of the Supreme Court's decision in Obergefell v. Hodges.

2016 saw additional staff changes. Peter Cultice was hired as our new Magistrate, and Jean Stevens retired as our Chief Probation Officer. Our Bailiff, Shane Kirkman, also moved on to new opportunities in the business community. As a result, Travis Stevens was promoted to Chief Probation Officer, Kayla Higgins was promoted to CASA Director, Noah Burris was hired as a Probation Officer, and Thomas Galbreath Jr. was hired as Bailiff.



In 2016, the Court continued its efforts to educate young people about the dangers of addiction and poor life choices. Working with the county school systems, the Court implemented a program entitled “Thinking for a Change.” The goal of the program is to teach young people to make better choices in their daily lives.

The Probate Court rolled out the Family Guardianship Training Course in 2016, which was offered on four separate occasions. This program was developed in cooperation with the Guernsey County Board of Developmental Disabilities, Area Agency on Aging, Region 9, and the Mental Health and Recovery Services Board.

During 2016, the Court completely revised and adopted the Local Rules of Court, for both the Juvenile Division, as well as the Probate Division. The last time the Local Rules had been revised and updated was in the mid-1990s. With so many changes in the law and court procedure, it was my opinion that comprehensive Local Rules were necessary so that the public, and the attorneys practicing before the Courts, can have confidence in how justice is administered in Guernsey County. The updating and revising of the Local Rules is an ongoing practice to be accomplished by the Judge.

I continued to stay active within our state associations, maintaining appointments to the Juvenile Law and Procedures Committee of the Ohio Association of Juvenile Court Judges, as well as the Probate Law and Procedures Committee of the Ohio Association of Probate Court Judges. From these committees, I was able to monitor and contribute to changes in the law that affects both the Juvenile and Probate Court.

Also in 2016, I was elected to the Board of Directors of the Ohio Association of Juvenile Court Judges. Through my involvement with these groups, I hope to bring many ideas and best practices to our Courts here in Guernsey County.

Both the Courts served the community in 2015 and 2016 in an efficient and professional manner.

Judge David B. Bennett  
Guernsey County Probate/Juvenile Court

## Contents

Executive Summary.....1 - 2

Contents.....3

Employees.....4

Juvenile Court Summary.....5

Supreme Court Report - 2016 Juvenile Division

Supreme Court Report - 2015 Juvenile Division

Local CASA Program.....6

Juvenile Probation Summary.....7

Programs Operated Under the Juvenile Court & Juvenile Probation...8 - 9

Alternatives to Adjudication.....10

Probate Court Summary.....11

Supreme Court Report - 2016 Probate Division

Supreme Court Report - 2015 Probate Division

Local Guardianship Program.....12

Fiscal Report - General Division.....13

Fiscal Report - Juvenile Probation.....14

Fiscal Report - Probate Court.....15

Contact Information.....16

## Employees

### Magistrate

Gerald Jones (Retired, December 2015)  
Peter Cultice (January 2016 – Present)

### Juvenile Court Division

Pam Feldner, Court Administrator (Retired, November 2015)  
Tim Welch, Court Director  
Amy Weaver, Deputy Clerk  
Debbie Bennington, Deputy Clerk  
Mary Caldwell, Deputy Clerk  
Mary Mitchell, Deputy Clerk  
Veronica Mourer, Deputy Clerk/Court Reporter  
Shane Kirkman, Bailiff (Resigned, December 2016)  
Thomas Galbreath Jr., Bailiff (December 2016 – Present)



### Juvenile Probation Division

Jean Stevens, Chief Probation Officer, CASA Director (Retired, May 2016)  
Travis Stevens, Probation Officer (Chief Probation Officer, June 2016)  
Kayla Higgins, Probation Officer (CASA Director, June 2016)  
Josh Snyder, Probation Officer  
Noah Burris, Intern, Probation Officer (May 2016 – Present)  
Tiffany Lowry, Probation Clerk  
Heather Robinson, Multi-System Youth Coordinator  
Casey McVicker, School Engagement Coordinator  
John Davis, Elementary School Truancy Prevention Officer  
Kathy Kelly Hibler, Grants Administrator

### Probate Court Division

Patricia Nichols, Court Administrator  
Deana Craft, Deputy Clerk  
Allanna Decker, Deputy Clerk

### Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)

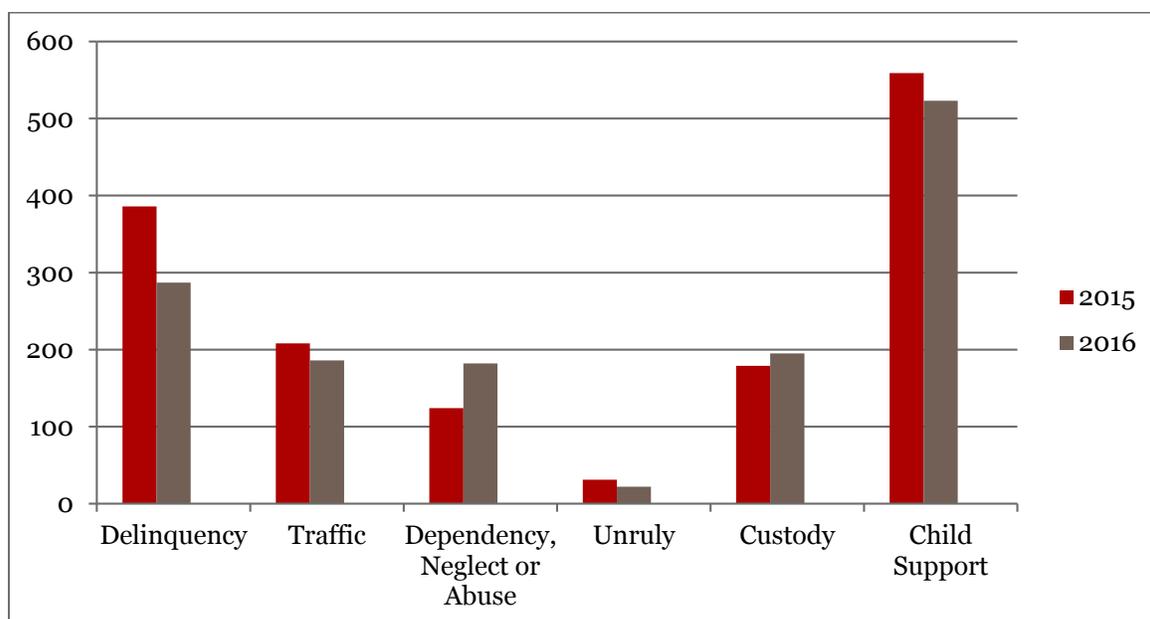
Kathy Walters, Volunteer Coordinator  
B.J. Yates, Volunteer  
Cheryl Gadd, Volunteer  
Julia Dowling, Volunteer  
Lynne Maynard, Volunteer  
Diane Carkin, Volunteer  
Laurie McKnight, Volunteer

## Juvenile Court

The Juvenile Court is a division of the Common Pleas Court of Guernsey County, and it is located on the second floor of the Courthouse.

Its purpose is to provide care, protection, and mental and physical development for the children in the Court's jurisdiction; to protect the welfare of the community, and to protect the public interest by treating children as persons in need of supervision, care, and rehabilitation.

Among the duties of the Juvenile Court include: Delinquent/Unruly Children (Truancy); Dependent, Abused, Neglected Children (Guernsey County Children Services); Traffic Offenders; Custody, Visitation, Child Support, Paternity involving unmarried, and in some cases, married persons, who are living separate and apart; and Juvenile Civil Protection Orders.



### Case Totals

#### *The Supreme Court of Ohio Reports*

- ▶ **2015** – The total number of cases in all categories pending beginning of period, new cases filed, cases transferred in, reactivated or redesignated was **1,590**.
- ▶ Highlighted areas include: Delinquency = 386; Traffic = 208; Dependency, Neglect or Abuse = 124; Unruly = 31; Custody = 179; and Child Support = 559.
- ▶ **2016** – The total number of cases in all categories pending beginning of period, new cases filed, cases transferred in, reactivated or redesignated was **1,472**.
- ▶ Delinquency = 287; Traffic = 186; Dependency, Neglect or Abuse = 182; Unruly = 22; Custody = 195; and Child Support = 523.

## **Local CASA Program** **(Court Appointed Special Advocates)**



The Court Appointed Special Advocates Program is affiliated with, and under the direction of, the Guernsey County Court of Common Pleas, Juvenile Division.

Its Mission is to speak for the best interests of the abused, neglected, and dependent children in the courtroom.

The Agency promotes and supports quality volunteer advocacy for children to provide each child with a safe, permanent, nurturing home.

The Volunteers serve as a fact finder for the Court by completely researching the background of child abuse, neglect and dependent cases.

They speak for the child in the courtroom, focusing exclusively on the child's best interests. A CASA Volunteer provides carefully researched information to help the Judge make decisions.

The Volunteers continue to monitor the child during the life of the case, helping to ensure that he or she will be raised in the best possible environment.

Among the requirements to become a CASA Volunteer include:

- Must pass a criminal background investigation.
- Must be 21 or older.
- Complete a face to face interview with the CASA Program Director.
- Pass all requirements.
- Complete 40 hours of training.

Established through the Guernsey County Juvenile Court in 1991, the local CASA Program had a Director, a Volunteer Coordinator, and 6 Volunteers during the 2015 calendar year, as well as the same number in 2016.

## Juvenile Probation

The Juvenile Probation Department is located on the ground floor of the Courthouse, and is responsible for performing many duties beyond the supervision of the juveniles on probation.

The Staff is involved in facilitating and participating in many programs to encourage the growth and support to the youth they encounter.

Everyday duties include: attending court hearings; completing risk assessments, providing referrals; making school, home, and community visits; attending trainings; informal hearings; and advocating for the juveniles they are involved with, as appropriate, to help ensure their success and well-being.

### Additional Important Facts:

- There are currently 3 Probation Officers and 1 Supervisor.
- There is a female (Kayla Herron) that deals with gender specific issues. She also handles the sexually aggressive youth.
- The Probation Officers meet with the youth a minimum of once a week, but usually 2 to 3 times per week, generally at school.
- There is an additional person (John Davis) who handles truancy issues in the county.
- There is one person (Casey McVicker) who handles truancy issues in the Rolling Hills Local School District (Middle School & High School).

**On average, there are 160 juveniles on probation at any given time.**

### Drug Screens Administered to Youth

**2015 – 322** Total screens administered - **167** Positive  
150 Marijuana; 3 Extended Opiates; 3 Benzodiazepines; 1 Cocaine;  
6 Dilute; 3 Amphetamines (prescribed medication).

**2016 – 605** Total screens administered - **306** Positive  
297 Marijuana; 1 Extended Opiates; 2 Benzodiazepines;  
2 Dilute; 8 Amphetamines.

## Current Programs Operating Under Juvenile Court & Juvenile Probation

**One Death Is One Too Many** - This was a one-time presentation (two separate events for each school level) for the local high schools and middle schools to bring awareness, prevention and intervention information to students about drugs, alcohol and suicide. The program was a collaboration of community agencies, and it was funded mainly through the Southeastern Ohio Regional Medical Center and the ENGAGE grant.

**Thinking For A Change** – This is an evidence-based program from the U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections. It is an integrated cognitive behavioral change program, which focuses on social skills, cognitive self-change, and problem solving. The main goal is to teach individuals how to stop, think, and make better choices, which will lead to avoiding conflict and poor decision making. It is currently being used with local high school and middle school students; however several area counseling agencies also use to with adults. This program is provided through the Guernsey County Juvenile Probation Department.

**Creative Options** – This is a wraparound program for families with children (Ages prenatal to 21). It uses the model of teams with a central facilitator who assists the family by supporting their voice, and linking service providers with the families. These teams are made up of natural supports and service providers, including the schools and the family. The focus is to streamline and prioritize the goals and needs of the families to make sure that they are attainable, and to make sure that all family members are working together for the betterment of the family and its functioning. This program is provided through the Guernsey County Family and Children First Council.

**ENGAGE Program** – ENGAGE is a high-fidelity wraparound program for youth, ages 14 – 21, who will be transitioning to adulthood with limited or no natural supports. The goal is to prepare younger youth for adulthood, and assist older youth with the independence skills they will need to succeed without the support of family or responsible adults who can teach them stability and life skills. This program is provided through the Guernsey County Family and Children First Council.

**Parent Project** – The Parent Project is an evidence-based parenting program consisting of two different curriculums: Changing Destructive Teen Behavior, and Loving Solutions. Changing Destructive Teen Behavior is curriculum for parents of youth ages 12 to 21 who are out of control behaviorally, sexually active, violent, involved in gangs, or involved with drugs and/or alcohol. It provides parents with the tools and support to maintain consistency, structure, appropriate discipline techniques, and incorporate tough love. It also provides parents with information on how to connect with community services, such as mental health providers, law enforcement, and the court systems.

**Loving Solutions** – This curriculum is for parents of youth, ages 5 – 11. It is a more traditional parenting course, which teaches parents consistency, structure, and basic milestones for young children, such as how children of this age think, grow, and learn. It specifically covers appropriate discipline for this age group, and how it should be set-up, incorporated, and utilized in the home. It also provides parents with information on how to work with community supports, such as schools and mental health providers. These programs are provided through the Guernsey County Family and Children First Council.

## Current Programs Continued

**Independent Living – I’m 18 Now What?** – Independent Living is a life skills course covering social health, healthy relationships, physical health, employability skills, continued education planning, finance and budgeting, general homemaking, and transportation skills. This program is implemented by Creative Options, in conjunction with the United Way Young Professionals Program at Cambridge High School. The Young Professionals are community employees from different professional arenas who take time to be guest speakers and lecturers on some of the above topics. They also provide this service in a shortened version, covering employment and finance topics in Meadowbrook High School and the Mid-East Career and Technology Center. This program is provided through the Guernsey County Family and Children First Council.

**Drug Screens** – Any juvenile placed on probation is subject to random drug and alcohol testing at any time as part of their probation terms. A juvenile on probation for a drug or alcohol offense is screened much more frequently. Probation uses instant 8-panel screens, as well as 10-panel screens that are sent to the lab for confirmation and levels.

**Detention** – The Guernsey County Juvenile Court contracts with the Sargus Juvenile Detention Center in St. Clairsville, Ohio, and the Muskingum County Juvenile Detention Center in Zanesville, Ohio. The Court has 3 contracted beds at Sargus, and 2 contracted beds with 1 floater bed at Muskingum JDC. Juveniles can be sentenced to detention for up to 90-days.

**Electronic Monitoring** – Guernsey County Juvenile Probation uses Themis Tracking Services for EMHA. The units used will monitor the juveniles through a GPS system. The juveniles that are placed on EMHA have certain zones set-up, which determines where they can be. Probation Officers are able to monitor those youth who are placed on EMHA through their work computers, and also through an APP on their cell phones.

**13-Day Shelter Care** – This program utilizes Crisis Intervention, Intensive Counseling, Evaluation, and Family Involvement. It was designed for the Guernsey County Juvenile Court with All Well Behavioral Health Services to assist a juvenile that has been running away from home, or would fall under an unruly status charge, to maintain the safety of the child. The program can also be used for the observation of a juvenile with mental health issues, and to help expedite services for the child and/or family.

**Oakview Juvenile Residential Center** – Oakview is a facility that the Guernsey County Juvenile Court uses for males that have been adjudicated on a felony charge. They are placed there for a minimum of 6-months, or until they complete the program. While they are there, the juveniles will have a mental health assessment, drug and alcohol assessment, and attend individual, group and family counseling appointments. They also have in-house schooling, as well as community service work and assigned duties inside the facility. This is usually the last option for the Court before having to send a juvenile to the Ohio Department of Youth Services.

**Court Foster & Residential Placement** – The Juvenile Court will work with Guernsey County Children Services, and other agencies and resources to find solutions for youth. The Court uses several residential placements, depending on the needs of the child. The most common used by the Court is All Well Behavioral Health Services Residential, Cornell Abraxas (substance abuse), The Village Network, and Gender Specific (females). The Court will utilize a residential placement if there are several concerns with a child’s behavioral or mental health issues that cannot be addressed appropriately by the family.

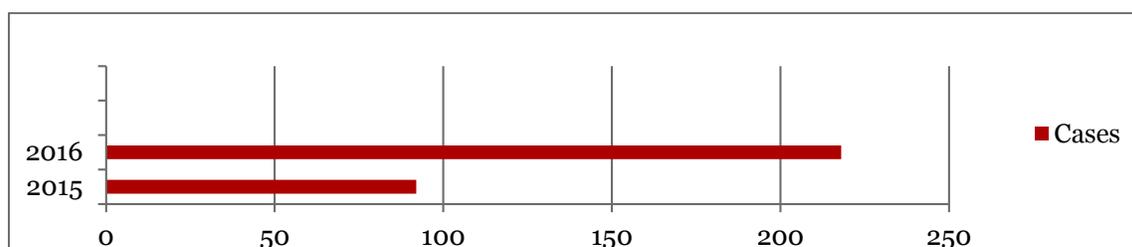
**Department of Youth Services** – DYS is the juvenile corrections system for the state of Ohio. DYS is statutorily mandated to confine felony offenders, ages 10 to 21, who have been adjudicated and committed by the Juvenile Court. During their stay, youth are engaged in programming that is designed to address their criminological and behavioral needs. Each of the facilities also operates a year-round school that offers general curriculum, as well as vocation opportunities.

## Alternatives to Adjudication

**Grade K – 6 Prevention** – The Prevention Officer receives referrals from schools within the county on students and/or families that have been red flagged for attendance or behaviors within the school. The Prevention Officer makes contact with the family and child. They address the problems and concerns in a meeting with the school to establish conditions in order to correct the issues. All parties will then sign an informal contract that states the recommendations in order to alleviate the filing of charges with the Juvenile Court.

**2015** – Worked with **92** different cases.

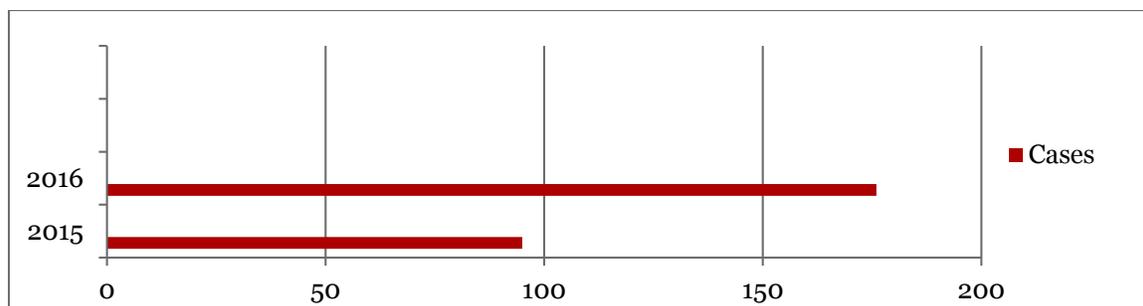
**2016** – Worked with **281** different cases.



**Grade 7 – 12 Truancy** – The Truancy/Engagement Coordinator receives referrals from schools on students who have been red flagged by the school for their attendance. The Truancy/Engagement Coordinator will meet one-on-one with the child to try and determine the reason for the absences from school. The Coordinator will also conduct meetings with the child and parent(s), where informal contracts will be signed which outline the issues and the recommendations to correct the problems that are presented.

**2015** – Worked with **95** different cases.

**2016** – Worked with **176** different cases.



## Probate Court

The Probate Court is located on the second floor of the Courthouse, and has over 200 separate duties that it is charged with by the Ohio Revised Code.

Each of Ohio's 88 counties has a Probate Division of its Court of Common Pleas, and their duties range from the issuing of marriage licenses to overseeing testamentary trusts valued at millions of dollars.

The duties of the Probate Court include the following:

- Marriage Licenses
- Administering Estates
- Guardianships
- Conservatorships
- Mental Illness
- Adoption
- Correction of Birth Certificates
- Change in Name
- Testamentary & Inter Vivos Trusts
- Appoint to Boards & Commissions

Case Types	Totals for 2015		Totals for 2016	
	Number of Cases Opened	Cases Pending at the End of the Year	Number of Cases Opened	Cases Pending at the End of the Year
Adoptions	20	8	13	4
Birth Correction/Registration	3	0	0	0
Probate Civil	9	12	10	10
Conservatorship	3	3	1	2
Estates	197	165	178	153
Guardianship of a Minor	1	13	3	14
Guardianship of an Incompetent	34	291	36	278
Guardianship Emergency	16	0	14	0
Marriage License	269	0	240	0
Minors Settlement	4	21	1	21
Name Change	20	0	21	0
Trust	1	24	0	20

## Local Guardianship Program

Guardianship is one of the more restrictive protective services available under Ohio law and is only necessary when individuals are unable to care for their basic needs, finances, or medical issues and when a less-restrictive alternative is not feasible.

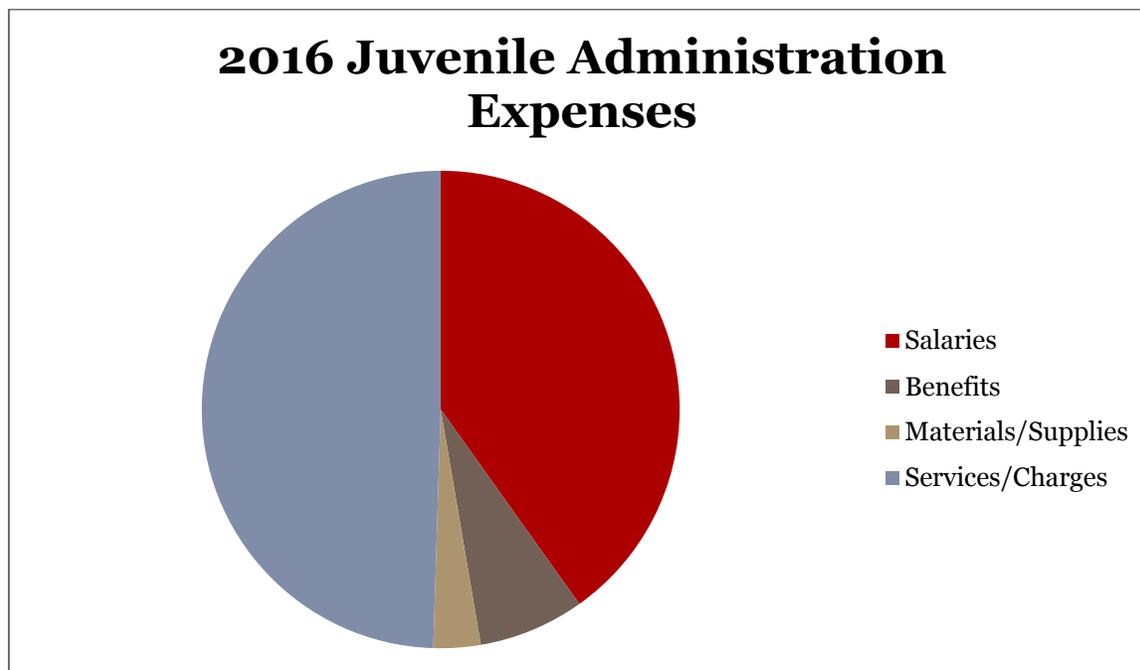
People placed in guardianship are especially vulnerable, and there is a great need for willing volunteers, family members, and attorneys to act on their behalf. In many cases, every decision affecting those individuals is in another person's hands. That is why it is so important for guardians to carry out their duties responsibly.

A Guardian holds a unique role with respect to the ward and the Guardian has an obligation to obtain an understanding of the fundamentals of that relationship. Formalized training is one means to gain that competency.

- ▶ The Probate Court has adopted Local Rule 66, which requires family guardians to attend a shortened local version of the Supreme Court of Ohio's Guardian Fundamentals Training Program.
- ▶ This program was developed in conjunction with the Guernsey County Board of Developmental Disabilities, Mental Health and Recovery Services Board, and the Area Agency on Aging Region 9. 2016 was the inaugural year for this new local program.
- ▶ The training sessions are offered 4 times per year at various times, and all family guardians must attend this program once during the year.
- ▶ This program assists the guardians in complying with the law, as well as helping them learn about the different resources that may be available to them for the benefit of their ward.

## Fiscal Report

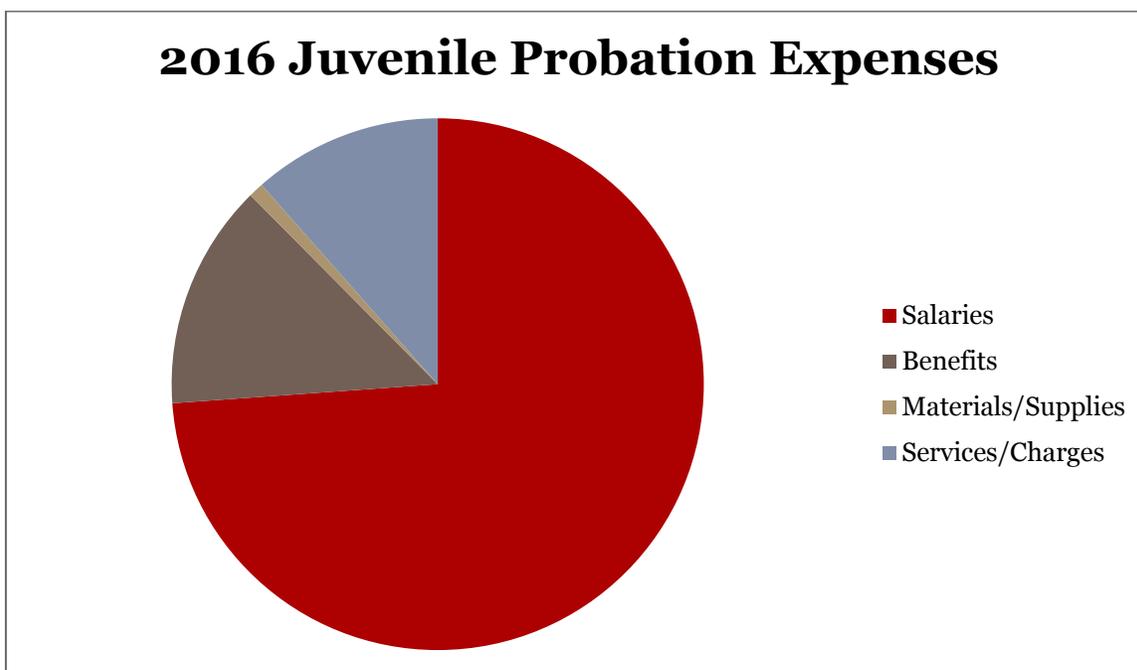
Funding for the Guernsey County Juvenile/Probate Court and Juvenile Probation is received from a variety of sources, with the majority coming from the County's General Fund, and some programs being supplemented with several grants.



<b>2016</b>	
Salaries	\$264,845.62
Benefits	\$ 47,264.02
Materials/Supplies	\$ 21,000.00
Services/Charges	<u>\$326,600.00</u>
<b>Total Appropriation</b>	<b>\$659,709.64</b>

<b>2015</b>	
Salaries	\$210,500.00
Benefits	\$ 41,692.18
Materials/Supplies	\$ 46,000.00
Services/Charges	<u>\$349,570.13</u>
<b>Total Appropriation</b>	<b>\$647,762.31</b>

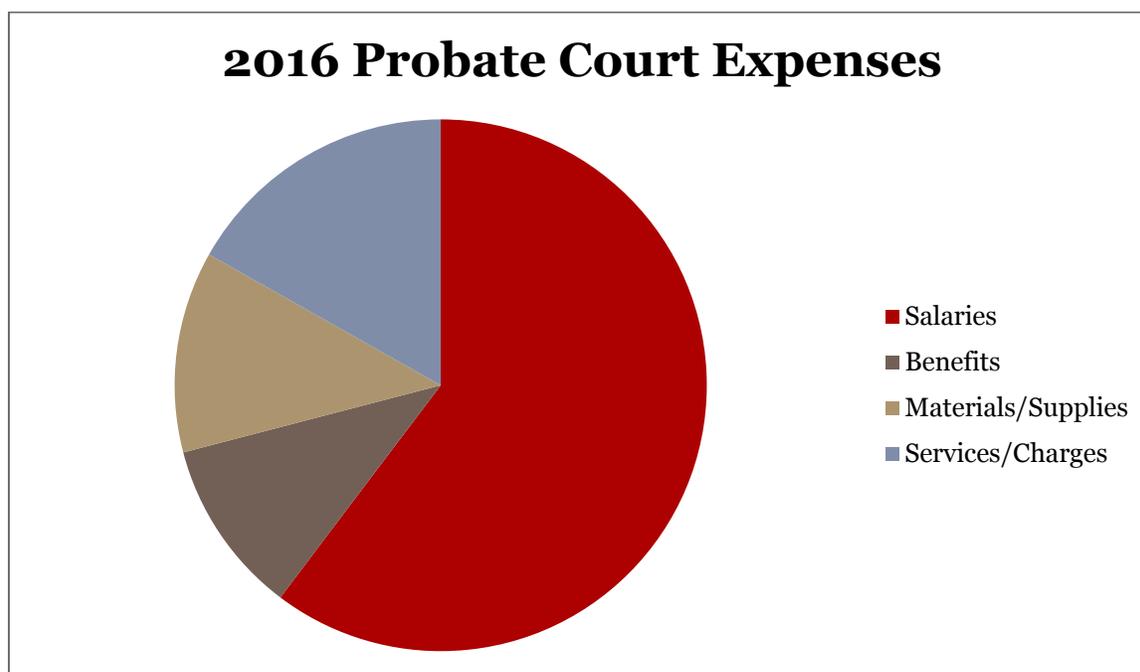
## Fiscal Report Continued



<u>2016</u>	
Salaries	\$243,772.60
Benefits	\$ 45,285.99
Materials/Supplies	\$ 3,000.00
Services/Charges	\$ 38,000.00
<b>Total Appropriation</b>	<b>\$330,058.59</b>

<u>2015</u>	
Salaries	\$217,535.15
Benefits	\$ 37,959.88
Materials/Supplies	\$ 2,000.00
Services/Charges	\$ 33,000.00
<b>Total Appropriation</b>	<b>\$290,495.03</b>

## Fiscal Report Continued



### 2016

Salaries	\$116,634.06
Benefits	\$ 20,585.20
Materials/Supplies	\$ 23,688.92
Services/Charges	\$ 32,535.71
<b>Total Appropriation</b>	<b>\$193,443.89</b>

### 2015

Salaries	\$114,428.73
Benefits	\$ 18,987.98
Materials/Supplies	\$ 19,279.00
Services/Charges	\$ 25,540.77
<b>Total Appropriation</b>	<b>\$178,236.48</b>

## Contact Information



Guernsey County Courthouse  
801 East Wheeling Avenue  
Cambridge, Ohio 43725

Juvenile Court - (740) 432-9266  
Probate Court - (740) 432-9262  
Juvenile Probation - (740) 432-9229  
CASA Program - (740) 439-5697

[www.guernseycounty.org](http://www.guernseycounty.org)

Monday – Friday – 8:30 A.M to 12:00 P.M. – 1:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M.