



NEWS RELEASE

Mansfield Municipal Court

Honorable Jerry Ault, Judge
Honorable Frank Ardis Jr., Judge
Jamie Wood, Court Administrator

Court Programs Recognized by Ohio Supreme Court Judge Initiates Review of Program Costs and Outcomes

Mansfield, Ohio – Mansfield Municipal Court Specialized Docket Programs have been recognized by the Ohio Supreme Court for the second time in the past three months as the court reviews initial findings from studies ordered earlier this year.

Judge Jerry Ault noted that he recognized early in his career the need to address the “revolving door” of offenders with repeated arrests, especially those involved in family violence offenses. He formed Ohio’s first Domestic Violence Court in 2008. Known as Specialized Dockets in Ohio they are designed to *reduce crime, incarceration and recidivism* by linking offenders with specific community projects and services designed to offer evidence based intervention and treatments to offenders while protecting victims and the general public. Simply put the goal is to reduce repeat offenders by addressing underlying causes of offender behavior which ultimately will save thousands of dollars spent on the cost of incarcerations.

Ault has also been recognized for starting Ohio’s first Veteran Court to address the growing number of Veteran’s involved in the criminal justice system. Mansfield likewise initiated the third Mental Health Court in Ohio has operated a Treatment Court for many years.

According to Ault “the programs appear to be working from evaluation of day to day contacts; however we needed more definitive information to include a cost analysis”. Earlier this year the Judge requested the Office of Quality, Planning, and Research within the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Service perform an analysis to determine if the programs produced potential savings as a result of offenders engaging in treatment programs instead of being incarcerated.

ODMHAS selected the Veteran’s Treatment Court for the analysis and tracked 117 offenders between March 2009 and February 2013. The study determined that 99 of the 117 offenders were sentenced to incarceration and approximately 58% spent at least one day in jail with an overall average of 15 days for those in the program. Cost savings were realized in two ways. First actual incarceration cost savings ranged from \$734,000 to \$978,000 over the study period. Second, since the program links Veteran offenders with VA Treatment Services the reduced cost to local service providers was reduced by \$64,000. Additionally more than \$30,000 in fines and costs were levied by the Court and program offenders paid 99% of all fines ordered. The study also provided the court with greater detail as to services provided.

Of course recidivism (repeat offenders) was also a concern. The Court reviewed 200 offenders who were terminated from one of the four Specialized Docket Programs between May 2012 and



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November 2013. The participants were tracked for at least one year out of the program. Findings revealed 85% or nearly 9 out of every 10 offenders *who completed programing* had no negative law enforcement contact during the 12 months. The sampling of offenders *who failed to complete the program* revealed 6 out of every 10 (57%) reoffended within the 12 month period and most within 6 months.

Judge Ault stated “The outcomes from both studies are compelling. These programs work when participants stay in the program. These programs are not a pass. They are normally at least one year and the offenders work for everything they get. But those who are successful know it is a life changing event. Not only have we helped change a life, hopefully we helped an entire family all while saving taxpayer dollars”.

Nearly all costs of Specialized Docket Programs are paid by fines and fees paid by the participants as well as state and federal grants. The Court has received more than \$700,000 in grant funding for our special programs in the last three years.

Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice Maureen O’Connor congratulated Mansfield Municipal Court and the Judges for providing the leadership necessary to receive recognition of their Specialized Docket Programs through Certification.

“Specialized dockets have proven effective at addressing persistent criminal behaviors,” said Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice Maureen O’Connor. “Specialized dockets result in significantly lower recidivism rates which means offenders become productive members of society, for which we all benefit.”

Mansfield Municipal Court has been a leader in innovated programming for courts. Specialized Dockets are now common throughout Ohio and the Supreme Court’s new standards provide a minimum level of uniform practices for specialized dockets, allowing local courts to innovate and tailor to meet their community’s needs and resources.

The [Commission on Specialized Dockets](#) has 22 members who advise the Supreme Court and its staff regarding the promotion of statewide rules and uniform standards concerning specialized dockets in Ohio courts; the development and delivery of specialized docket services to Ohio courts; and the creation of training programs for judges and court personnel. The commission makes all decisions regarding final certification.

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