

Franklin County Municipal Court



PRESS RELEASE

June 2, 2025

Municipal Court Programs and Graduates Lowering Recidivism

Thirty-four people who spent years in and out of the criminal justice system recently completed two-year diversionary programs offered through the Franklin County Municipal Court, that are proven to offer the best chance at ending this cycle of crime.

Between 60-70 percent of the Municipal Court's Specialized Docket graduates do not re-enter the system two years after completing the program. That remarkably low recidivism rate is known to continue beyond two years, but lifelong recidivism rates are not available for the more than 1,500 former participants of the Municipal Court's Specialized Docket programs.

These graduates completed one of three diversionary dockets, which are crafted to work with those with specific barriers that have contributed to their time in the criminal justice system. Those programs are:

- h.a.r.t. court, which offers a second chance to those battling opiate addiction. It is overseen by Presiding Municipal Court Judge Jodi Thomas and graduated 15 participants on April 30, 2025.
- MAVS Court, which assists U.S. veterans with mental health or substance abuse issues, held a ceremony on May 19th for nine graduates. It is overseen by Presiding Municipal Court Judge Jarrod Skinner.
- L.I.N.C. Court, which is a program for defendants who have serious mental health issues, graduated 10 participants on May 21, and is overseen by Presiding Municipal Court Gina Russo.

Combined, these three Specialized Docket judges have more than 23 years of experience on the bench and another 33 years as either prosecutors or defense attorneys.

The programs are all certified and follow the Supreme Court of Ohio. They often take two years to complete. The dockets link participants to individualized treatment and offer a structured approach that recognizes environmental and behavioral challenges.

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They also link participants to social support, housing and transportation, and individualized assistance based on need, such as assistance getting a driver's license, job coaching, and interview training.

The graduation ceremonies demonstrate the court's unwavering commitment to providing second chances, promoting long-term recovery, and reducing recidivism.

The Franklin County Municipal Court is the largest and busiest court in the state and has two additional Specialized Dockets. The Municipal Court also offers CATCH Court for those who have been sexually exploited, which will have a graduation ceremony in September. The court also has Recovery Court for those whose addictions to alcohol and drugs other than opioids serve as their primary dependency; this court will graduate participants in December.

Anyone wanting more information on CATCH Court can learn more online at www.FranklinCountyMuniCourt.org/hart. Information on MAVS Court can be found at www.FranklinCountyMuniCourt.org/MAVS or www.FranklinCountyMuniCourt.org/LINC for L.I.N.C. Court.

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