

# MEDINA COUNTY COURT OF COMMON PLEAS

## PROBATE & JUVENILE DIVISIONS

SEPTEMBER 2025 NEWSLETTER

VOL. 1, ISSUE 1



This month, we welcomed our newest magistrate, Timothy Smanik, and a new Juvenile Deputy Clerk, Maria Fenos. Magistrate Smanik and Maria's previous experience and demeanor made both of them the ideal candidates to join our staff. We are excited to have them and can't wait to see what great work they will accomplish for the Court and the community.

We are also working hard on the launch of the Court-Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program. It is my duty as Judge to protect the children of Medina County but also ensure that they get to have a voice in the process. This Program will help accomplish that goal.

It is also my duty to protect the precious elderly of our community. We do all we can within the courtroom to make the best decisions for the highest quality of life for our wards, but that is not possible without the contributions from our guardians. If you are the type of person who feels that you can make a difference in the life of an individual who may be alone, please consider joining our Volunteer Guardianship Program.

We will also continue to do our best educating the community on court processes and procedures. Court can be a confusing and overwhelming experience for those who have never been here. In this issue, we highlight victim's rights and resources available in the county and state.

I look forward to sharing what else Juvenile and Probate Court is working on in the months to come and the positive impact we strive to have in Medina County.

Sincerely,

*Judge Kevin W. Dunn*

### IN THIS ISSUE:



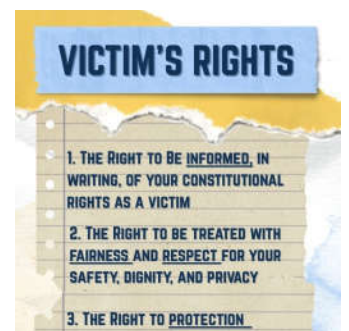
Meet New Magistrate  
Timothy D. Smanik



Court-Appointed Special  
Advocate (CASA) Program  
Prepares to Launch in  
Medina County



Consider Becoming a  
Volunteer Guardian



Crime Victims:  
Know Your Rights



Medina County Court of Common Pleas, Probate & Juvenile Divisions  
**Judge Kevin W. Dunn**  
225 E. Washington Street, 4th Floor, Medina, OH 44256  
Juvenile Court: (330) 725-9709  
Probate Court: (330) 725-9703  
[www.medinaprobate.org](http://www.medinaprobate.org)

## MEET TIMOTHY SMANIK, MEDINA COUNTY PROBATE & JUVENILE COURT'S NEWEST MAGISTRATE



Judge Kevin W. Dunn swore in Timothy D. Smanik as the newest Medina County Probate and Juvenile Court Magistrate on September 22. Smanik joins us with approximately 16 years of legal experience, including serving as council for Ohio Department of Youth Services, Assistant County Prosecutor and Public Defender in Cuyahoga County, council for Medina County Job and Family Services, and most recently as Trial Magistrate in Medina County Domestic Relations Court.

"Most of my experience is in juvenile justice," Smanik said of his shift to Juvenile and Probate Court. "I feel I have a good relationship with Judge Dunn and the knowledge base to do the job well, so, this felt like a great career step."

Smanik has experience in Medina County Juvenile Court as he served as council for Medina County Job and Family Services.

"I have had an excellent

experience with this court from an attorney perspective," he said. "It is well-organized and clear that staff here cares deeply about their job and the perception of the Court."

Smanik said he hopes to contribute to the court's positive impact on the community right away.

"I take it as a huge compliment to be hired and I intend to deliver as a valued member of Judge Dunn's staff."

Smanik will be responsible for hearing cases primarily within the Probate side of the court, including Estates, Guardianships, Birth Corrections, Minor Settlements, Civil Action, Trusts, Wrongful Deaths, and Name Changes. He will also

hear Juvenile cases as needed.

Smanik intends to provide Medina County residents and parties in his courtroom with a supportive and fair experience as they navigate some of the hardest and most complex moments of their lives.

"One of the most important things to me is to make sure parties leave my courtroom feeling that there was fundamental fairness and that they had the opportunity to be heard," he said. "This is what I have been about my entire legal career. I think if those two things can be achieved, it reinforces the faith of the institution of the Court and I will be proud of the work that I am doing."

## MEET NEW JUVENILE COURT DEPUTY CLERK MARIA FENOS



Also joining Medina County Juvenile Court as the newest deputy clerk is Maria Fenos, who was sworn in by Judge Dunn September 9, 2025.

Maria joins us from Cuyahoga County Domestic Relations Court, where she worked as a scheduler and magistrate's assistant.

Maria will be a front-face of the Court by assisting parties, council, and

law enforcement at the Juvenile Court counter or via phone. She will process Juvenile cases such as delinquency, unruly, traffic, tobacco, abuse, neglect, and dependency cases, and civil matters.

"I couldn't pick a better group of coworkers," Fenos said. "They are helping me learn a lot and quickly. I'm very happy to be here."

## CONSIDER BECOMING A VOLUNTEER GUARDIAN

Sometimes an adult is not able to manage his or her own affairs because of advanced age or some other mental or physical disability. When a person becomes unable to care for himself or herself, it may be necessary for a guardian to assume the decision-making responsibility for the individual.

A guardian is an adult appointed by the Probate Court to protect, act, and make decisions for a person, known as the ward. Once appointed, a guardian is answerable to the Court for providing proper care and management of the ward's affairs in the ward's best interest.

"It can be difficult to obtain guardians for needy persons, so it is necessary to recruit volunteers from the community for this important role," said Judge Kevin W. Dunn. "It is an honorable and fulfilling duty but not one to be taken lightly. The Court expects Volunteer Guardians to care for their wards as they would their own family, but they will not have to do it alone. The Court is here to help every step of the way."

The Court provides initial and ongoing training to all volunteers. Attorneys are also available to provide free legal advice and assistance to guardians. Interested individuals must complete an application, provide references, and complete initial training.

A volunteer guardian must be at least 21 years old and a resident of Ohio. Volunteers must have a caring heart and sincere desire to assist the elderly to live their lives with dignity. You can make a difference in the life of an individual who may be alone and in need of a friendly visitor or the assistance of a decision-maker. **LEARN MORE HERE.**



### INTERESTED IN BECOMING AN APPOINTED COUNSEL? HERE'S HOW

RETURN ALL COMPLETED APPLICATIONS TO:

JENNIFER MOORE,  
COURT ADMINISTRATOR  
MEDINA COUNTY  
PROBATE AND JUVENILE COURTS  
225 E. WASHINGTON ST., 4<sup>TH</sup>  
FLOOR  
MEDINA, OHIO 44256

• IN ACCORDANCE WITH OHIO ADMINISTRATIVE CODE 120-10, ALL ATTORNEYS MUST MEET SPECIFIC QUALIFICATIONS TO ACT AS APPOINTED COUNSEL. SUP. R. 48 REQUIRES SPECIFIC TRAINING FOR GUARDIANS AD LITEM AND SUP. R. 66 REQUIRES SPECIFIC TRAINING TO ACT AS GUARDIAN OF A PERSON.

• SHOULD YOU DESIRE TO BE PLACED ON THE COURT'S APPOINTED COUNSEL, GUARDIAN AD LITEM OR PROBATE GUARDIAN LISTS, PLEASE COMPLETE THE APPLICATION LINKED BELOW AND SELECT THOSE CASES FOR WHICH YOU MEET THE QUALIFICATION AND ARE WILLING TO ACCEPT.

• PLEASE NOTE THAT THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR APPOINTED COUNSEL ARE EITHER THE TRAINING OR THE REQUIRED EXPERIENCE, YOU DO NOT NEED BOTH.

• COMPLETE THE OPERS INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM AND W-9.

[CLICK HERE FOR APPOINTED COUNSEL APPLICATION](#)

# COURT-APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE (CASA) PROGRAM PREPARES TO LAUNCH IN MEDINA



IN 2025, 48  
CASA  
PROGRAMS  
WILL SERVE  
CHILDREN  
ACROSS 62  
COUNTIES IN  
OHIO,  
ACCORDING TO  
THE MEDINA  
COUNTY  
CHILDREN'S  
CENTER.  
MEDINA  
COUNTY IS  
PROUD TO BE  
PART OF THAT  
ADVOCACY  
WORK.

Medina County Juvenile Court has jurisdiction over abuse, neglect, and dependency cases within our county. There is no question that children in those cases must be given the opportunity to use their powerful voice in matters about them and their well-being. That is why Judge Kevin W. Dunn partnered with the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program, a statewide network that supports children, and the Ohio CASA/GAL Association.

The program works by bringing trained CASA volunteers into the courtroom to advocate for the child and their best interest. In matters where a Guardian *ad litem* is not required, the Court may appoint a CASA volunteer to oversee the case and work directly with the child during the pendency of the proceedings.

“Abuse, Neglect, and Dependency cases are some of the most gut-wrenching moments I see on the bench,” said Judge Dunn. “It’s not only my wish, but my duty to

ensure that there is someone in that child’s corner with full commitment to their best interest.”

To ensure the program runs smoothly, Judge Dunn, along with members from the Children’s Center of Medina County, interviewed many qualified candidates for the position of Director. Erin Grohe was chosen for the position in July. Grohe previously worked with CASA of Portage County, connecting with community partners, creating policies, and training volunteers to advocate for abused and neglected children.

Grohe is working closely with the court for the first CASA appointed cases in Medina County. As the program continues to grow, CASA of Medina County will allow community members to directly serve children and families by recruiting and training volunteers from all backgrounds.

For anyone interested in the opportunity to help change a child’s story or to learn more about volunteering, contact Director Erin Grohe at [egrohe@medinacountychildrenscenter.org](mailto:egrohe@medinacountychildrenscenter.org).



“IT IS EASIER TO BUILD STRONG CHILDREN THAN TO REPAIR BROKEN MEN.” -  
FREDERICK DOUGLAS

# CRIME VICTIMS: KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Did you know that the Constitution strictly enforces the rights of victims of crime? These rights are protected in a manner no less vigorous than the rights afforded to the accused.

In Medina County Juvenile Court, when a victim is listed on the complaint, the deputy clerks follow a victim's rights process for proper notification. The victim has the right to be present at any stage of the proceedings conducted on the record unless the Court decides they must be excluded to protect the juvenile's rights to a fair proceeding. While the alleged victim is notified of the upcoming initial court date, this is the only notice of hearing that is done automatically for victims. If the victim wishes to be present at any further hearings, they must request so in writing and provide a current address. This can be done through the Victim Rights Requirement Form provided by the Medina County Prosecutor's Office.

On a case where a victim elects to exercise their rights, this form helps the Court determine who all needs to be notified for upcoming hearings, if the victim wishes to keep their name, address, and identifying information redacted on case documents, and even if interpreters are required to assist in the proceedings.

Deputies from the Medina County Sheriff's Office are assigned to the courthouse to maintain safety of employees and the public. This includes victims who appear for hearings. If you feel unsafe in the presence of another, the Court can arrange for a deputy to be in the hallway and courtroom during the pendency of the proceedings and until all individuals have safely left the building.

The courtroom isn't the only place a victim can seek protection and services. Agencies such as Crime Victim Services with Ohio Attorney General's Office, Ohio Victims of Crime Compensation Program, and the Ohio Crime Victim Justice Center are all valuable resources.

OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE  
CRIME VICTIM SERVICES

MEDINA COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE  
VICTIM/WITNESS DIVISION

OHIO VICTIMS OF CRIME  
COMPENSATION PROGRAM

HOPE AND HEALING  
SURVIVOR RESOURCE CENTER

OHIO SUPREME COURT  
MARSY'S LAW AND CRIME VICTIM RIGHTS

## VICTIM'S RIGHTS

1. THE RIGHT TO BE INFORMED, IN WRITING, OF YOUR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS AS A VICTIM

2. THE RIGHT TO BE TREATED WITH FAIRNESS AND RESPECT FOR YOUR SAFETY, DIGNITY, AND PRIVACY

3. THE RIGHT TO PROTECTION

4. THE RIGHT TO BE NOTIFIED OF ALL PROCEEDINGS AND OF THE DEFENDANT'S RELEASE OR ESCAPE (UPON REQUEST)

5. THE RIGHT TO BE PRESENT AT ALL PROCEEDINGS

6. THE RIGHT TO BE HEARD AT PROCEEDINGS

7. THE RIGHT TO SPEAK WITH THE PROSECUTOR (UPON REQUEST)

8. THE RIGHT TO A TIMELY PROCEEDING

9. THE RIGHT TO PRIVACY AND PROTECTION OF IDENTITY

10. THE RIGHT TO FULL AND TIMELY RESTITUTION FROM THE PERSON WHO COMMITTED THE CRIME AGAINST YOU

IF YOUR RIGHTS ARE NOT BEING HONORED, YOU OR YOUR ATTORNEY MAY SEEK REVIEW FROM THE APPROPRIATE COURT OF APPEALS AND DEMAND THAT YOUR RIGHTS BE RESPECTED

NOTICE: THIS PAMPHLET IS TO HELP YOU UNDERSTAND YOUR OPTIONS. IT IS NOT INTENDED TO ADVISE YOU ABOUT THE LAW.

# MEDINA JUVENILE & PROBATE COURT DIRECTORY

## Medina County Probate Court

Phone: (330) 725-9703

Fax: (330) 725-9119

## Medina County Juvenile Court

Phone: (330) 725-9709

Fax: (330) 725-9173

## Juvenile Probation Department

Phone: (330) 725-1860

Fax: (330) 764-8718

## Juvenile Background Checks

Phone: (330) 764-8714

## Medina County Juvenile Detention Center

Phone: (330) 764-8408

Fax: (330) 764-8412

### WEBSITE:

www.MedinaProbate.org

Click **HERE** if you would like to send a message to Medina County Probate and Juvenile Court.

Please note the staff of the Medina County Probate and Juvenile Court is prohibited by law (Ohio Revised Code Section 4705.07) from providing legal advice. Providing legal advice, no matter how small, can result in criminal charges for staff including fines and jail time.

- X** We cannot tell you what forms to fill out based upon your circumstances. If you ask for a specific form, the court can provide that to you.
- X** We cannot tell you how to fill out a form but can check the form to make sure all areas are filled out completely before filing.
- X** We cannot tell you what to file or how to file with the exception of letting you know that a form is incomplete, not properly signed or requires a filing fee.
- X** We cannot tell you whether or not you must appear at hearing, that information is contained in the hearing notice or court order.
- X** We cannot tell you what type of Estate to file based upon your specific circumstances.

## WHERE ARE WE LOCATED?

**225 E. Washington Street, 4th Floor  
Medina, Ohio 44256**

There is ample Free parking in the garage deck behind the courthouse. Check in at the clerk's counter on the fourth floor when you arrive.

