



Welcome to the Ashtabula County Probate & Juvenile Court

Holiday Court Closures for March 2024:

Juvenile / Probate Court:
None

Family Resource Center:
Open and on-call 24/7

Resource Guide on Online Safety, Grooming, & Sextortion

Human Trafficking is compelling someone to engage in a commercial sex act, labor or services through the use of force, fraud or coercion. These are difficult discussion to have, however it is happening in our community. But when you talk to people who have experienced this type of victimization, they don't see as victimization. They see it as their fault. They see it as something they grew up with – it is not human trafficking. It's just the way it is. They see it as a way to get drugs. They see it as something within their family. Shame and stigma keep them from labeling it. They even see it as something *they chose* to do so they are not at

someone else's mercy. But that does not change the fact that they are a victim of human trafficking. In 2022, Ashtabula County had 12 confirmed

reported human trafficking cases. One case is too many, click [here](#) for info more and scan the code below for safety tips.

ONLINE SAFETY, GROOMING & SEXTORTION

CAREGIVERS

Guide & protect youth in your care

YOUTH

Be empowered to make safe & healthy choices

SURVIVORS

Be empowered & supported

RESOURCE GUIDE



SCAN ME!

eyesupappalachia.org

Understanding Adultification Bias

What is Adultification? "Adultification" is when children are seen and treated by standards that are meant to be reserved for adults. At its core, "adultification bias" contributes to a false narrative that a youth's transgression was *intentionally malicious, instead of the result of immature decision-making*—a key characteristic seen in childhood. In 2017, the Center for Poverty and Inequity at Georgetown Law released a report that found black girls are 2.7 times more likely than white girls to be referred to

juvenile justice systems and 1.2 times more likely to be detained. Nationally, black girls were consistently given harsher punishments than white girls, even when accounting for prior records, age, and seriousness of the offense. The study posited black girls are perceived to be less innocent, and more adult-like than their white counterparts. The concept of adultification bias is relatively new. It examines the question of whether persons of authority and power consciously or unconsciously perceive certain juveniles as being more adult-like; and therefore,

more likely to receive harsher treatment and less leniency. Adultification bias may serve as a contributing cause of disproportionality in school discipline outcomes, harsher treatment by law enforcement, and differentiated exercise of discretion by officials across the spectrum of the juvenile justice system. "Adultification bias" may mean our youth of color are being denied an opportunity to make childhood mistakes, or to learn, grow, and benefit from correction. To learn more about adultification, and adultification bias, click [here](#). Or for questions contact Trina Benson at trina.benson@cadencecare.org

Remote Area Medical (RAM) is Back!

RAM will kick-off Friday, April 12, 2024, at Lakeside High School – 6600 Sanborn Road, Ashtabula, OH 44004. The parking lot will open no later than 11:59 p.m. As patients arrive at the parking lot, they will be provided with additional information regarding clinic opening processes and next steps. Clinic doors typically open at 6 a.m. Early arriving patients should be prepared with their own food, water, medicines, and clothing. Bathrooms are available on-site.

Free dental, vision, and medical services will be provided on a first-come, first-served basis. Due to time and resource constraints, patients should be prepared to choose between DENTAL and VISION services. Medical services are offered to every patient attending the clinic. All services are free and open to the public. No ID required. Inclement weather, volunteer cancellations, or other circumstances outside of RAM's control, may result in the parking lot opening earlier or a smaller number of patients being served. RAM encourages everyone who would like services, especially dental services, to arrive as early as possible.

*Clinic closing time may vary based on each service area's daily capacity. Please check RAM's clinic FAQ page for more information. **The above details are subject to change. Please continue

to check our schedule regularly for updates as your clinic dates near. Please visit their website [here](https://www.ramusa.org) for more information.

This is a great resource for our community! Please take advantage of this wonderful program!



Ashtabula, OH

April 13-14, 2024

Lakeside High School

6600 Sanborn Rd. Ashtabula, OH 44004

COMPLETELY FREE

NO ID REQUIRED

NO ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED

FOR MORE INFO: [RAMUSA.ORG](https://www.ramusa.org) | 865.579.1530

Developmental Disability Awareness Month

Every March, we celebrate National Developmental Disability Awareness Month. Each year, hundreds of advocates come to the Ohio Statehouse to advocate on issues important to Ohioans with Developmental Disabilities. This year's event is on March 12th, 2024. The event is meant to educate and empower Ohioans with developmental disabilities, their family members and other community allies to come together on a single day

to advocate policy issues which impact the lives of people with developmental disabilities. Locally, the Ashtabula County Board of Developmental Disabilities (ACBDD) will stream the event at their board office. Throughout March, the Ashtabula County District Library is set to showcase the beautiful "Work of Heart" masterpieces. If you're eager to exhibit your current or past artwork in the library's gallery, we invite you to register

[here](https://www.ramusa.org). We welcome you to join us for a special reception at the library on Monday, March 4th, starting at 12:00pm through 3:00pm. This event is open to all artists, their families, staff, and the community. The ACBDD will also officially kick off Developmental Disabilities (DD) Awareness Month at the reception. Don't miss this opportunity to share your artistic vision with the community and be part of a celebration that marks the be-

ginning of a significant month! Register now to be part of this special showcase. If you have questions please contact: Angela Thomas (440) 983-3216. There will be many other events throughout the month of March. Check out the Ashtabula County Board of Developmental Disabilities calendar [here](https://www.ramusa.org) for more details.

Upcoming Expungement Clinic

The Ashtabula County Public Defender is please to assist the public in creating a new beginning. The office will be offering a expungement clinic to assist individuals in a new life. **The clinic will take place at the Ashtabula County Public Defender's Office, 22 East Jefferson St., Jefferson, OH 44047. There are two dates for the clinic, Friday May 24th and Friday November 8th, 2024.** Be sure to mark your calendars for this very important clinic and opportunity. The event will run from 9:00am until 3:30pm. Please bring any helpful paperwork, such as a copy of your criminal record and bring any questions that you may have. For more information, you are encouraged to check out the Public Defender website [here](#). The

Ashtabula County Public Defender is dedicat-ed to defending the liberty, honor, and constitutional rights of individuals of all ages, whose cases have been entrusted to us. Through zealous advocacy, we strive not only to deliver excellence in our representation of each and every client, but also stand with our clients and the community in working to create a more just, fair and compassionate legal system.



Electronic Monitoring Without Discernment Can Work to Perpetuate Mass Incarceration



New Vera report finds that the use of electronic monitoring has exploded in recent years. However, unbridled use of this technology can be counterproductive. Craig Caudill had a plan for life after his release from prison. While incarcerated, he completed a commercial driver's license truck driving program in Huntsville, Texas. He was even entrusted to drive trucks for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) prison system after completing the program, transporting cotton across the state. Working as a truck

driver seemed like a solid option after his release in 2021. He knew there was a demand for truck drivers and that the work paid well. But four days before his release date, Caudill found out that he would be confined to his home for 18 months while on parole, with few exceptions. He would be required to wear a GPS ankle monitor, which would track his location and movements down to the minute. Caudill said it felt like everything he'd been working toward was taken away. Finding a truck driving

job would be impossible. "Now I have to come up with something else, and I have to do it while stuck in my house without the ability to move around," said Caudill. "It didn't make any sense to me." While on electronic monitoring, Caudill was required to submit his schedule to his parole officer for approval every two weeks. He was permitted to go grocery shopping for only one hour once per week. Read the rest of this article [here](#). Electronic Monitoring is also an issue in the juvenile justice system and should be used minimally.

Department of Youth Services (DYS) Admission Data through January 2024

The six Targeted RECLAIM courts (Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, Lucas, Montgomery and Summit) have admitted the thirty-six (+36) more youth as compared to the same period in FY2023 (+33.6%). The nine Expanded Targeted RECLAIM courts (Allen, Ashtabula, Butler, Licking, Lorain, Mahoning, Medina, Stark and Trumbull) admitted one (+1) more youth (+2.9%) as compared to the same time period in FY 2023. Combined, the fifteen courts participating in the Targeted RECLAIM initiative admitted one hundred eighty (180) youth, which is thirty-seven (37) more youth compared to the same

time period in FY 2023 (+25.9%). The percentage of minority youth admitted by the 15 courts is 90.6% which is up 7.0% when compared to the same time period in FY 2023. The number of minority youth admitted by all courts is one hundred eighty-four (184) youth compared to only fifty-four (54) white youth, this is a 8.7% increase in minority admissions, as a percentage of total admissions, when compared to the same time period in FY 2023. Admissions from Ohio's 73 Non-Targeted RECLAIM courts admitted eight (+8) more youth compared to the same

period in FY 2023, making statewide admissions for the first five months of FY2024 up by forty-five (+45) youth compared to the first three months of FY2023. Note that this data is only based on the seven months of the fiscal year and any forecasted changes in admissions will change as more data becomes available throughout the fiscal year.

	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024 July-November			projected	compared to
County	actual	actual	actual	actual	committed	revoked	total	FY2024	FY2023
Cuyahoga	54	76	78	74	29	2	31	74	0
Franklin	25	51	47	49	29	5	34	82	33
Hamilton	31	23	46	26	16	2	18	43	17
Lucas	14	12	12	13	13	1	14	34	21
Montgomery	7	10	21	12	4	2	6	14	2
Summit	5	4	9	16	5	2	7	17	1
6 county total	136	176	213	190	96	14	110	264	74

Ohio's Attorney Shortage: A Court Crisis

Judge Matthew Puskarich can list the attorneys in his county from memory. The Harrison County Juvenile and Probate Court judge said there are those in government roles – a prosecutor, an assistant prosecutor, one public defender, the common pleas court judge, and him. There are two corporate attorneys. And of the attorneys available to represent individuals in court, Judge Puskarich mentions that one is moving away, one lives the next county over, and one doesn't practice in juvenile court. In total, Harrison County has 13 active attorneys. Of those, there are only five private practice attorneys, who are the ones that could represent the county's roughly 15,000 residents in court. For every 15,000 residents in Cuyahoga County – the county with the most attorneys in the state – there are 61 private practice attorneys. That's one private practice attorney for every 246 Cuyahoga County residents versus one private practice attorney for every 3,000 people in Harrison County. The shortage of attorneys is a difficulty faced by many parts of Ohio. In April, a new state law to encourage lawyers to practice in rural areas took effect. With the support of the Ohio State Bar Association, the General Assembly created the Rural Practice Incentive Program. The program will repay law school loans for qualifying attorneys in communities with a certain ratio of attorneys to county population. They qualify if they agree to work as prosecutors or public defenders, or to represent people facing criminal charges who don't have the means to pay. The program can repay up to \$50,000 in loans for three to five years of service in the designated community. The Ohio Department of Higher Education is currently setting up the program, which received \$1.5 million in state funding. Underserved counties are identified in the law by determining the proportion between attorneys and population. Using that standard – 700 or more residents for each private practice attorney – the Ohio Access to Justice Foundation found that 81 of 88 Ohio



counties don't have enough attorneys for the need. That absence of attorneys causes a particularly concerning dilemma in criminal cases, given U.S. and Ohio constitutional rights. The constitutions entitle defendants charged with a crime to have legal representation. On the far west side of Ohio, Judge Jenifer Overmyer presides in Preble County Juvenile and Probate Court. She finds herself juggling unexpected scenarios that intersect with the need for attorneys. She has heard child welfare cases in which the children in a single case have different parents, who are each entitled to an attorney. That has at times meant appointing four or five attorneys for different parents on a single case, she said. "This is time consuming for our dedicated clerks

and sometimes wreaks havoc on our scheduling, too. When we have multiple attorneys, we have multiple calendars to coordinate," Judge Overmyer said. Conflicts that arise for attorneys also are a concern. "With our limited numbers, it unfortunately is not uncommon for an attorney to be unable to represent a particular person because they represented the other parent in a previous case," she said. There are only 20 private practice attorneys in Preble County, and Judge Overmyer said her list of those who can take cases has about 10 attorneys total. A handful of those are from other counties – mostly its next-door neighbor Montgomery County. The judge pointed out that the time available to locate an attorney has limits. This is a growing concern throughout the State of Ohio, read more [here](#) and [here](#).

Employee Anniversaries

This year, we will be thanking and focusing upon our employees on their work anniversaries. This month, we are celebrating four employee anniversaries. Our longest tenured this month is Jim Howell. Known to most as "Mr. Jim", he is a long-time employee of the Juvenile Court. Over his 30 years of service, Mr. Jim has completed a variety of jobs and is always willing to go above and beyond for the community and the court. Mr. Jim plays a huge part in our community's prevention efforts, while exploring our areas with a small group of teens and sharing what he believes are the most valuable

concepts of life, trust, respect, honesty and responsibility. Our next employee isn't seen often, but has been a staple at our Court on and off for seven years. One of our part-time night security guards, Aaron Wery has worked for the Court since 2021, before that, he was working for us full-time. Aaron has an amazing work ethic. He works a full-time job, teaches and spends time with his four children. He is another employee that goes above and beyond and is always willing to jump in when problems arise. Aaron is missed during the day but is a leader on the night shift. Next, from the Probate Division, is

Chief Deputy Clerk, Andrea Hathaway. This is Andrea's second year at the Probate Court. She has given stability and direction to the Court. Our final anniversary is Staff Attorney, Michael Hiener. This grant funded position is due to expire at the end of the year. In this position, Mike has performed factual and legal research and analysis. He drafts entries, agreements and a wide variety of legal correspondence. Mike is an attorney by trade, and has a key legal eye. We will be adding a new employee this month, and have one retirement coming. Stay tuned regarding our current employees, and for career opportunities.