



STATE OF ILLINOIS  
CIRCUIT COURT  
22ND JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
McHENRY COUNTY, ILLINOIS



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**For Immediate Release**

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**22nd Judicial Circuit of McHenry County Awarded \$1.3 Million Grant to  
Expand Specialty Court Programs**

**WOODSTOCK, IL** — The 22nd Judicial Circuit of McHenry County is proud to announce the receipt of a significant grant totaling \$1,309,860 from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). This grant, to be disbursed over the next five years, is designated for the expansion of the Circuit's Specialty Court Programs, specifically aimed at enhancing treatment services for individuals with Substance Use Disorder (SUD) and/or co-occurring substance use and mental health disorders.

“We are ecstatic to receive this grant to help us evolve and expand the work of our Circuit in addressing the needs of our community,” explains Chief Judge Michael Chmiel. “The team we have assembled in our Problem-Solving Court Division has done remarkable work in identifying emerging issues and needs, and working to address them. This funding helps further our mission.”

Kelly Scimeca, Director of Special Projects, and Courtney Knopp, Finance Coordinator, with the assistance of Jon Thomas Consulting authored the grant proposal. “This grant has the potential to transform our program,” says Kelly Scimeca. “Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) is a powerful and proven treatment for various mental health disorders, yet its high cost makes it inaccessible to many. By securing this grant, we aim to eliminate this financial barrier and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to benefit from this effective therapy. We truly want to set up our clients for success and hope that they continue to live their best lives once they graduate from the program.”

The funding is earmarked for several key enhancements:

**The mission of the 22nd Judicial Circuit of McHenry County is to be the guardian of life, liberty and property to all seeking access to justice, by adhering to practices that ensure equality, fairness and confidence in the judiciary.**

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*Integration of Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT):* This therapy will be incorporated into the Drug Court programs to improve emotional regulation and coping skills, crucial for individuals battling substance abuse. DBT is renowned for its effectiveness in treating addiction alongside mental health issues by combining cognitive-behavioral techniques with mindfulness strategies.

*Comprehensive DBT Training:* All clinical staff will receive training in DBT to ensure that all participants in the Specialty Court Programs receive consistent, high-quality treatment. This approach fosters a balance between accepting challenges and making positive changes.

*Continuum of Care Expansion:* The funding will also support a broader continuum of care, encompassing prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery services. This comprehensive approach is designed to meet the complex needs of individuals with SUD and co-occurring disorders within the criminal justice system.

*Access to Therapeutic Services:* By offering DBT within the specialty court office, the program ensures all clients have access to essential therapeutic care, regardless of financial limitations.

*Enhanced Support for Clinical Staff:* The introduction of a Clinical Supervisor will enhance support for our clinical staff, ensuring adherence to the DBT model. Additionally, a dedicated Case Manager for each of the three courts will provide consistent, personalized support for clients.

"This grant not only supports our ongoing efforts to provide comprehensive, effective care but also reinforces our commitment to the community and our belief in the power of recovery," says Dan Wallis, Trial Court Administrator. "We are grateful for SAMHSA's support and are eager to see the positive changes that these funds will bring to the client, but also to the community that they live in."

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