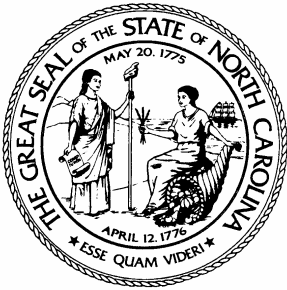


Unified Family Courts of North Carolina

Family Court Counties

Anson	Buncombe
Burke	Caldwell
Catawba	Cumberland
Durham	Greene
Halifax	Lenoir
Mecklenburg	Montgomery
Moore	New Hanover
Pender	Pitt
Randolph	Richmond
Stanly	Union
Wake	Wayne



OUR MISSION

To help resolve cases involving children and families through combined efforts of the family, the Court, and community services.

To approach each case in a way that is not overly adversarial or intrusive but always in a just, timely and efficient manner.

To be courteous, safe, and accessible and to provide quality service to those in need.

UNION COUNTY FAMILY COURT SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

Implemented in 1999, Union County was part of the first wave of Family Courts in North Carolina. Union County is now the fastest growing county in North Carolina and the 16th fastest growing county in the nation. In January 2006, Union County split from what was the 20th District (Anson, Richmond, Stanly and Union Counties) to become a single-county district, now known as Judicial District 20B.

Union Family Court is frugal and creative with personnel resources. The staff consists of only one Case Coordinator and one Administrator. The Office of the District Court Judges allows two Judicial Assistants and a Family Drug Treatment Court Coordinator to provide additional services. For the past two years, college interns have been used regularly and a Title V (Council on Aging) part-time staff person is currently employed. The Custody Mediator and Access & Visitation Coordinator are shared with Judicial District 20A. There are four District Court Judges (the fourth began in February 2007).

In Fall 2007, four Rules Revision Committees were established to suggest changes to the Local Rules for General, Domestic, Juvenile Delinquency and Juvenile Abuse/Neglect/Dependency. The new rules became effective on January 1, 2008 and were the result of a great deal of input from staff, clerks, judges, attorneys and paralegals.

Union County Family Court meets regularly with stakeholders. Since January 2007, Family Court has arranged quarterly CLE programs for the local bar and will continue to do so as an ongoing service. Meetings between the Family Court staff and the staff of the Office of the Clerk of Superior Court has allowed for better communication and thus a great working relationship between the two offices. Union Family Court continues to hold paralegal meetings which have proven to make the court more effective and efficient.

The Family Court Office continues to provide the citizens of Union County many different

programs. One of the "rising star" programs, the Supervised Visitation Center (SVC), was recognized on September 19, 2007 as a "Nine Who Care Finalist" by WSOC-TV. Over 200 hundred nominations were received in three different categories: individual, group or business/industry. Union County's SVC provides supervised visitation for non-custodial parents and their children involved in Civil, Domestic Violence and/or Juvenile DSS Court. Trained volunteers provide supervision and an off-duty officer provides security. Since the first case on April 8, 2006, the SVC has provided supervision for over 500 family visits. This service uses no public funds. The SVC is currently open on Saturday mornings and is housed in a Weekday Pre-school at Central Methodist Church in Monroe. The visiting parent may be ordered to pay twenty dollars per visit (fee may be waived if necessary). This money is used to pay the security officer. Union Family Court continues to speak to local civic groups in order to recruit and train volunteers for the SVC. It is hoped that the SVC can be expanded to be open additional hours each week and include a Supervised Exchange Center as well.

In November 2007, a Truancy Council was implemented with a "true" Truancy Court. Truancy Court prosecutes juvenile delinquency cases and adult criminal cases with allegations of failure to adhere to the school attendance policy. This community effort ensures that children attend school and therefore have the opportunity to become more productive adults.

Union Family Court is currently working on a video presentation to be aired on the public access channel. "This is Your Court" will be hosted by Chief District Judge Chris Bragg. He will interview different court personnel and discuss the many programs offered by the District Court. Airing will begin Spring 2008. Martha.S.Hall@nccourts.org

FAMILY COURT NEWS FLASHES

Buncombe Family Court-Judicial District 28: Mary Deane Kinnett has joined Buncombe Family Court as a Judicial Assistant for Family Court and Assistant to the Custody Mediator. Buncombe has decreased the number of pending domestic non-child support cases that are over one year old from 159 on April 30, 2007 to 60 on November 30, 2007. They are also participating in "Project Re-Entry", a Goodwill sponsored program that addresses interests of inmates who are getting out of prison to help re-acclimate them into the community. Ellen.G.Rose@nccourts.org

Burke, Caldwell & Catawba-Judicial District 25: The staff is delighted to welcome Judge J. Gary Dellinger who joined Catawba County Family Court in January 2008. He was appointed to the newly created judgeship in March 2007. Judge Dellinger worked with families during his 5 years of private practice and while prosecuting assault and sexual assault cases during his 25 years with the District Attorney's Office. A team of court and agency staff have been working to implement a Family Drug Treatment Court. A grant application will be sent to the Governor's Crime Commission for approval. A.J.Coutu@nccourts.org

Cumberland Family Court-Judicial District 12: Debbie Norman, Safe Havens Supervised Visitation Coordinator; Roenitha McNeill, Safe Havens Case Manager; and Amber Hayes, Judicial Assistant, all became part of the Family Court team last quarter. Cumberland County continues to be committed to decreasing domestic violence. Safe Havens held its annual Candlelight Vigil for victims of domestic violence in October. There was an excellent turnout and they hope to expand activities next October. Effective January 2, 2008, Cumberland County implemented a specialized Domestic Violence Court, designed to improve the coordination between agencies and create consistency in case processing and sentencing. Mia.M.LaMotte@nccourts.org

Durham Family Court-Judicial District 14: In collaboration with Durham System of Care, Durham Family Court sponsored a continuing legal education program on November 2, 2007 entitled "The ABCs of Child and Family Teams." At this daylong training, nineteen attorneys who practice in juvenile court learned about the system of care; child and family teams; accessing mental health, developmental disability and substance abuse services for clients; common mental health terms; recent mental health reform initiatives; and addressing ethical concerns in this arena. Lori.M.Price@nccourts.org

Greene, Lenoir & Wayne Family Court-Judicial District 8: Chief District Court Judge Joe Setzer is in the final steps of hiring a new Family Court Administrator to replace Mona Williams who is now the Family Court Administrator in District 3A. Judge Setzer hopes to have the new FCA in place in time to attend the New Family Court Judges & Staff Training at the North Carolina Judicial Center in February. Joseph.E.Setzer@nccourts.org

Halifax Family Court-Judicial District 6A: Shirley Webb-Owens is the new Juvenile Case Coordinator/Family Treatment Court Case Coordinator. She will also serve as the back up Domestic Case Coordinator and oversee the Truancy Diversion Project. Her first day was September 24, 2007. Previously, Mrs. Webb-Owens was a probation officer and moved to Family Court from her position as a magistrate in Halifax County. She replaces Shawna Harris who accepted employment with Nash County DSS. Susan.W.Horrell@nccourts.org

***Montgomery/Moore/Randolph-Judicial District 19B:** Family Court Case Coordinators have been hired! Sherry Allred has a Master's degree in Social Work, 19 years of experience as a Juvenile Court Counselor and previous experience as a social worker. DeMaca Adams has a paralegal degree, eight years of experience in the Moore County Clerk's Office and paralegal experience. Amanda Jones has a degree in Psychology and previously worked for Randolph County Government. Staff is learning the computer systems, preparing to review current cases and updating Casewise. An organizational meeting of the Local Family Court Advisory Committee has been scheduled to develop Local Rules. Special thanks to the Family Courts who have kindly answered questions, provided forms, shared materials and hosted visits! This assistance has been invaluable.

Nancy.M.Butler@nccourts.org

New Hanover & Pender Family Court-Judicial District 5: Family Court Judge Shelly S. Holt (District Court Judge since 1992; Family Court Judge since 2000) retired on December 31, 2007 and was presented with the Order of the Longleaf Pine by Governor Easley. She continues to serve on the Juvenile Justice Planning Commission of the Governor's Crime Commission and the State Advisory Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Suann.N.Bechtel@nccourts.org

***Pitt Family Court-Judicial District 3A:** District 3A has hired case coordinators Kay Brown and Megan Hartzog. Staff is currently working on closing old cases and drafting Domestic Rules. Between November 1, 2007 and December 31, 2007, the number of pending domestic non-child support cases that are over one year old was reduced by fifty percent. It is anticipated that the new Rules will be effective March 1, 2008. Mona.N.Williams@nccourts.org

* Denotes new Family Court Districts as provided by the NC General Assembly in the 2007-2008 budget.

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[AOC Family Court Management Specialists](#)

Western Region 919-890-1204 Lori.C.Cole@nccourts.org

Central Region 919-890-1203 Alisa.D.Huffman@nccourts.org

Eastern Region 919-890-1211 DeShield.Smith@nccourts.org