

**MEDINA COUNTY COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
DOMESTIC RELATIONS DIVISION
99 Public Square, 2nd Floor
Medina, OH 44256**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Tim Shema, Community Services Coordinator
Phone: 330-725-9740
Date: March 1, 2018
Subject: Grant to Support Families in the Justice System

Judge Mary Kovack is pleased to announce that the Medina County Domestic Relations Court was recently awarded a \$699,961 federal grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women. Known as the ***“Grant to Support Families in the Justice System”***, this grant is the result of a collaborative effort by Judge Mary Kovack, Community Legal Aid, and the Battered Women’s Shelter of Summit and Medina Counties.

“This grant will bring much needed services to Medina County families affected by domestic violence. When I first ran for judge, I promised you that I would put families first. I will continue to find new and inexpensive ways to help you and your family. I will continue to put families first.”

The grant will allow the Court to provide a dedicated domestic violence magistrate, whose docket will include all domestic violence cases and companion domestic relations cases, such as divorce and parentage (custody cases for never-married parents), involving the same families. By providing a dedicated domestic violence magistrate, the Court will ensure that Medina County families affected by domestic violence receive the support and assistance they need as they make their way through the justice system.

Through the services provided by Community Legal Aid, Medina County families who are affected by domestic violence and who qualify financially will have increased access to Legal Aid attorneys for both domestic violence and domestic relations cases. Judge Kovack believes that families affected by domestic violence are better served if they have access to legal advice and/or legal representation.

Through the services provided by the Battered Women’s Shelter, the Court will be able to expand services at the Gift Exchange Center (also known as the Supervised Parenting Time & Safe Exchange Center). The Battered Women’s Shelter will also provide a “family justice victim advocate”, who will support and assist families affected by domestic violence as their companion domestic relations cases make their way through the justice system.

“For the last 18 years that I have been your domestic relations judge, supporting families has been my top priority. Every day, I strive to do exactly as the grant program title

says: ***Support Families in the Justice System.*** With this generous grant, I will continue to support families in the justice system. From the creation of the Gift Exchange Center in 2004, to receipt of other domestic violence grants in 2011 and 2013, to the implementation of the Intensive Case Management program in 2014, and to the award of this grant, I will never stop trying to find ways to better serve you and your family.”
