



For Immediate Release

May 3, 2022

**ARKANSAS ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS ANNOUNCES THEY
ARE THE RECIPIENT OF A JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM GRANT**

(Little Rock, Arkansas) -- The Administrative Office of the Courts announces they are the recipient of an Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Juvenile Justice Reform grant. The grant will include a review of five selected counties around the state: Sebastian, Jefferson, Pulaski, Washington, and Faulkner, to identify disparities in the Arkansas Juvenile Justice System. The findings will be reported to and recommendations for further changes will be made by the Supreme Court’s Commission on Children, Youth, and Families to ensure fair and equitable treatment for all youth and will continue the AOC and the Commissions’ almost decade-long Juvenile Justice Reform effort in the state which has involved all three branches of government. Juvenile Justice stakeholders, including law enforcement, juvenile officers, judges, legislators, educators, and other stakeholders from around the state, have been called upon to serve on a grant Leadership Team Committee to guide the efforts to allow for successful implementation and corresponding intervention to alleviate disparities in the system.

This collective of professionals from the differing corners of youth justice will provide invaluable guidance in this Juvenile Justice System review. We are grateful for their commitment and contributions.

The Grant Leadership Team Committee is attached.

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Arkansas Juvenile Justice Leadership Team Members

Supreme Court Justice Rhonda Wood*

Hon. Cindy Thyer, Second Judicial Circuit, Division 4

Hon. Tjuana Byrd, Sixth Judicial Circuit, Division 8

Senator Missy Irvin, State Senator*

Hon. Joseph Wood, Washington County Judge

Suzanne Jones, Department of Education Safe Schools Coordinator

Dr. Cheryl May, Criminal Justice Institute Director

Dr. Jeremy Strick Owoh, ED. D. Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Jason Ulsperger, Arkansas Tech University Professor

Robert E. Tellez, Immigration and Criminal Law Attorney

Chris Hussein, Legal Aid of Arkansas Staff Attorney

Antwan Phillips, At-Large Little Rock City Director, Partner Wright, Lindsey, and Jennings

Angela Collier, Director of Culture, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Walmart*

Lori Kumpuris, Prosecutor Coordinator’s Office Deputy Attorney

Brenda Stallings, Public Defender

Anastasia Boles, Bowen School of Law Professor

Jennifer Craun, Director Administrative Office of the Courts Juvenile Division*

Candance Williams Executive Director of the Rural Community Alliance

Rich Huddleston, Arkansas Advocates for Children Executive Director*

Lekita Thomas, United Family Services Executive Director*

Kessa Smith, Department of Human Services Deputy Director

Sgt. Crystal Simmons, Little Rock Police Department

Shelia Franklin, Former Juvenile Officer

Faye Shepherd, AOC Juvenile Justice Specialist

Clorissa Prince, Administrator Commission on Children, Youth, and Families

*Commissioners with the Supreme Court Commission on Children, Youth, and Families