

Who Makes Up The Treatment Team And What Are Their Roles?

- Judge Jones - Leads the treatment team and conducts court hearings
- Attorneys— Represents best interests/wishes of their client
- Case Manager - Assess client needs; Coordinates community-based services for client; Attends court hearings with client; Reports progress to program coordinator
- Treatment Provider(s) - Representative from each agency providing services to the family; Provides treatment services based on need
- Guardian ad litem, (if applicable) - Represents the best interests of the children
- FF Program Coordinator- Liaison between the Court and all treatment providers and case manager. Completes quick screening tools with litigants to determine appropriateness for program.
- Bailiff - Assists Judge Jones with daily court operations
- Case Western Reserve University - Completes research on the effectiveness and outcomes of FFP

What Services Are Available?

All levels of care will be available through the FFP. This may include residential, IOP, PH groups, aftercare, etc. Litigants may also be linked with employability classes, parenting classes, individual/family counseling, youth counseling, anger management, youth mentoring, etc.

How Are The Services Paid For?

Services are paid for using litigant insurance programs. There may also be grant funding available where appropriate.

Families First Program

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Cuyahoga County Domestic Relations Court Families First Program



The Families First Program is an intervention program designed to support parents who are experiencing substance use and/or mental health issues that may impact their ability to co-parent.



Families First FAQs

Families First Program Benefits

This program will link parents with the treatment and supportive services necessary to assist with substance use, mental health and parenting issues. Graduates will leave with a sustainable parenting time schedule that benefits both parents and children.

How Does A Case Qualify?

- Parties engage in a contested divorce filing with children
- Parties reveal issues pertaining to mental health/substance use
- Appropriate parties complete prescreening assessments which will determine if they qualify for the Families First Program
- Appropriate cases will then be referred to Moore Counseling and Mediation Services (MCMS) for a Clinical Assessment
- The program is completely voluntary and both parties have to agree to participate



How Does The Intervention Process Begin?

Judge Jones will meet with litigants at the first pretrial. The quick screening process will take place prior to the first pretrial when/if issues of mental health or substance use are found.

What Are The Phases Of The Program?

1. Screening/Assessment
2. Phase I – Hearings held every 30 days to review treatment progress and parenting time schedule
3. Phase II – Hearings held every 60 days
4. Graduation

What Happens After The Case Is Referred To Moore Counseling and Mediation Services (MCMS)?

- MCMS will conduct a Clinical Assessment and provide recommendations to Judge Jones and the treatment team
- Litigant will also be linked with a case manager to facilitate treatment referrals in accordance with recommendations
- Case Manager report progress to treatment team and will accompany litigant to each hearing
- Case manager will also assist litigant in removing barriers to treatment and find services that will benefit the family

What Are The Graduation Requirements?

- Completion of or consistent engagement in treatment services that are assigned by the treatment team
- Consistent engagement with case manager
- Development of effective parenting time schedule

How Long Is The Program?

- The program lasts up to 18 months

Can A Case Be Terminated From The Families First Program?

Terminations can result if either party withdraws voluntary consent to participate OR if litigant's continued lack of progress in treatment requires the Court to terminate involvement.

If terminated, the case will return to traditional case processing but will remain with Judge Jones.

Will the FFP Address Other Issues In My Divorce?

The Families First Program focuses solely on co-parenting issues. However, all aspects of your divorce will be addressed prior to the finalization of your case.