

**Franklin County  
Municipal Court**

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**Paul M. Herbert**  
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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Date: June 16, 2014**

**Franklin County Municipal Court Receives State Certification of its  
Changing Actions to Change Habits (CATCH) Specialized Docket**

The Franklin County Municipal Court's Changing Actions to Change Habits (CATCH) Specialized Docket has earned final certification from the Supreme Court of Ohio's Commission on Specialized Dockets.

In January 2014, new certification standards as adopted by the Supreme Court went into effect. In order to receive the certification, Judge Paul M. Herbert, who presides over the CATCH program, had to submit an application, provide specific program materials, and undergo a site inspection.

Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor congratulated the Franklin County Municipal Court and Judge Herbert for receiving final certification.

"Specialized dockets have proven effective at addressing persistent criminal behaviors," said Chief Justice O'Connor. "Specialized dockets result in significantly lower recidivism rates, which means offenders become productive members of society, for which we all benefit."

Specialized dockets are problem-solving courts that target certain populations based on the type of offense or on the traits of offenders. Specialized dockets use a combination of different techniques to hold offenders accountable while also addressing underlying causes, which usually include mental health disorders or drug and alcohol dependency. There are more than 150 specialized dockets in Ohio courts that deal with issues such as: Drugs and Alcohol, Mental Health, Domestic Violence, and Sex Offenses.

The new standards provide a minimum level of uniform practices for specialized dockets throughout Ohio, and allow local courts to innovate and tailor programming to meet their community's needs and resources.

"When the CATCH program was formed in 2009, the focus was on reducing recidivism rates of people who had lengthy criminal histories because of multiple solicitation and prostitution convictions," said Judge Herbert. "Over time, it became clear to me that participants had suffered a tremendous amount of trauma as victims of human trafficking. With the support of my fellow judges, court staff, various treatment and service providers, and other community partners, the CATCH program helps participants overcome the trauma they have experienced and move on to

become active and committed members of the community. Human trafficking continues to be a problem, not only in central Ohio, but across the state. Receiving certification from the Supreme Court allows us to continue this important work that benefits not only the participants but also the residents of the City of Columbus and Franklin County.”

Recommended practices outlined in the certification process include establishing eligibility requirements, evaluating effectiveness of the specialized docket, and assembling a treatment team for implementing daily operations of the specialized docket. The team is led by the specialized docket judge and can include licensed treatment providers, law enforcement, and court personnel.

The Commission on Specialized Dockets has 22 members who advise the Supreme Court and its staff regarding the promotion of statewide rules and uniform standards concerning specialized dockets in Ohio courts; the development and delivery of specialized docket services to Ohio courts; and the creation of training programs for judges and court personnel. The commission makes all decisions regarding final certification.