

# PRESS RELEASE

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Office of the Chief Judge  
Madison County Courthouse  
Edwardsville, IL 62025

*For immediate release:*

## **MADISON COUNTY RECEIVES JUVENILE COURT IMPROVEMENT GRANT**

Third Circuit Chief Judge David Hylla announces that Madison County has been awarded a Court Improvement Program grant by the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts to improve its juvenile court programs under the guidance of Judge Martin Mengarelli, the Presiding Juvenile Court Judge. The grant was awarded for fiscal year 2018/19 and will allow for the court to hire two part-time attorneys to enhance the representation of children who are victims of abuse and neglect.

“Madison County will be able to assign guardians-ad-litem to exclusively represent the children thanks to this grant,” stated Judge Mengarelli. “The goal is to improve the court’s response to issues that affect the well-being of abused and neglected children in areas of physical and mental health as well as their educational achievement,” he added.

The Madison County Court Improvement Program qualified for the funding by focusing on the legal representation team to provide more advocacy for each child. The goal is to assign the two newly-hired guardians ad litem to the children in all new cases and to transfer some children from existing cases to improve the quality of the legal representation. Madison County currently has approximately 850 open cases of abuse and neglect of juveniles. This year’s caseload increased 25% over the prior year.

“One of the most important things our courts and our society can do is to protect children from abuse and neglect. Too many of our children are subjected to a variety of forms of mistreatment,” explained Chief Judge David Hylla. He added, “I commend Judge Mengarelli for proactively seeking out this grant and being innovative in his approach to tackling the issues of child abuse and neglect.”

The attorneys will be part-time independent contractors who will work at the direction of the Chief Judge. They will be required to provide timely, knowledgeable, and effective representation in every juvenile abuse and neglect case. For more information, contact the office of the Chief Judge at 618-296-4576.