



**CIRCUIT COURT OF CLAY COUNTY,  
MISSOURI**

SEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
11 SOUTH WATER STREET  
LIBERTY, MO 64068

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

Clay County Domestic Violence Court Celebrates One Year of Success

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Founded in October 2023, the mission of the Court is to increase the safety for victims of domestic violence and their children, while requiring accountability for offenders.

Judge O'Hara spearheaded the creation of the court and its success would not be possible without the support of its partners including Synergy Services, Beacon Mental Health, Clay County Sheriff's Office and the Kansas City Police Department. Clay County is the first Domestic Violence Court in the State to offer this type of programing for both criminal and civil cases.

Participants of the Domestic Violence Court are ordered to attend because an Order of Protection has been entered against them or are defendants in certain criminal cases. Completion of three conditions is ordered for participants. First, participants must complete a Batterers' Intervention assessment followed by 28 to 52 weeks of Batterers' Intervention classes through Synergy Services. Synergy has long been recognized as a leader throughout the community when it comes to breaking the cycle of domestic violence.

"We are proud to be a part of this innovative judicial process and are thankful for our partnership", **said Dr. Sara Brammer, Vice President of Family Violence Services for Synergy Services** "We believe this process supports offender accountability and will improve survivors' safety."

Mental health and substance use assessments and treatment is the second component of the program. Finally, participants are ordered to relinquish all firearms and not possess firearms throughout the duration of their time in the program as required by law. Both the Clay County Sheriff's Office and Kansas City Police Department assist in this initiative.

"I am thankful for the Clay County Domestic Violence Court's commitment to survivors of domestic violence," **said KCPD Chief Stacey Graves**. "The Kansas City Missouri Police Department shares in that commitment and values the work that is being done by Judge O'Hara. The Domestic Violence Court is a tremendous asset for Clay County."

As of October 2024, the Court has more than 50 participants and approximately half of those served reside in Kansas City.

"In just one year, the Clay County Domestic Violence Court has proven that when you provide intervention, accountability, and counseling to offenders, we can prevent deadly situations and build a safer community," **said Mayor Lucas**. "More Kansas City families are able to find a safe and positive path forward, thanks to the Honorable Alisha O'Hara and her dedicated attorneys and staff. I look forward to working with Judge O'Hara and all our County leaders to expand the positive impact of domestic violence court across Kansas City."

While offenders are required to complete certain conditions throughout their time in Domestic Violence Court, survivors of domestic violence and their children are offered free services that include therapy, legal services and housing.

"We know that arresting abusers is not going to put an end to domestic violence," **Sheriff Will Akin said**. "It's one step in a process that also requires accountability in the court system and services for victims. The Clay County Domestic Violence Court helps put all of those pieces together. A year after its inception, the Clay County Sheriff's Office remains committed to providing resources that will help the program succeed."

The court was developed entirely through grant funding secured by Dr. Teri Hargrave, Director of the Office of Dispute Resolution. Grants under both the United States Department of Justice and the State of Missouri's Department of Public Safety have been utilized.

"The Office of Dispute Resolution is honored to partner with the Clay County Domestic Violence Court. We fully support this initiative to bring victim safety, community safety, and offender accountability to the residents of Clay County. Domestic Violence Court is a beacon for positive change and forward movement in the justice system" **said Dr. Teri Hargrave**.

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