Summit County Domestic Relations Court

Administrative Judge Katarina Cook

OHIO JUSTICE BUS EVENTS 2025 IMPACT REPORT

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The Problem

Summit County is under serious strain: as of 2024 concerning domestic relations courts, Summit holds the second-highest number of incoming cases per judge in Ohio, meaning each judge handles far more than is typical—slowing down access to justice, increasing delays, and overwhelming the system.[1]

Family Law cases are also on the rise. According to NOLO, No One Left Out Legal Publishing, the median cost of divorce nationally was $3000 in 2019 and that number has undoubtably risen.[2]

Taken together, the overloaded docket per judge plus the financial burden of family law issues is a serious barrier for the working poor.

The Solution

In 2023 Administrative Judge Cook set an ambitious goal for Summit County Domestic Relations Court: Reduce time in Court, lessen anxiety due to pro se litigant guess-work, and build trust in the Court.

Each of these goals ultimately strive to streamline incoming cases, reducing costs and time, and create access to Justice

Judge Cook knew that the solution had to come from outside the Court; leading to a partnership between the Ohio Justice Bus, Community Partners, and the local Family Law Bar.

Through the Leadership of Judge Cook, the Court brings legal resources directly into neighborhoods across Summit County, eliminating transportation barriers and saving residents the expense and time of traveling downtown.

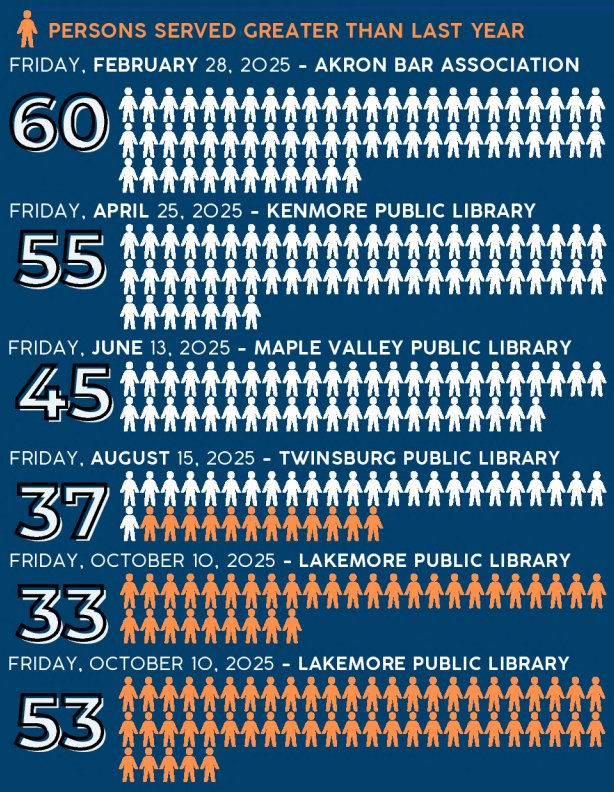
1) Based on 2024 caseload statistical reports submitted to the Ohio Supreme Court as found on Ohio Supreme Court Data Dashboard

2) NOLA Press, The Divorce Hotlist: 10 Questions You're Asking in 2025, 04/01/2025

At each Ohio Justice Bus Event, residents meet with local attorneys who provide free legal information and advice. We partner with community support organizations—libraries, nonprofits, social-service providers—to ensure people also connect to housing, healthcare, and financial resources that stabilize families in crisis.

In some situations, the Justice Bus model goes a step further: individuals are able to attend a same-day hearing before Judge Cook, cutting through months of delay and reducing the stress that comes from waiting. By combining mobile access, pro bono legal help, community wraparound services, and streamlined court connections, we address not just the legal symptoms but the structural barriers that keep Summit County's most vulnerable residents from fair and timely resolutions.

THIS YEAR...



OVER THE YEARS...

Year	Total Participants Served	Events	Ave. Part./Event
2023	165	4	41.25
2024	185	5	37
2025	283	6	48
TOTAL	633	15	42

The Impact

Over just three years, our outreach has expanded in both scale and efficiency. We have grown from serving 165 Summit County residents in 2023 to 283 this year (2025). From 2023 to 2025, participation grew by over 70%, with 2025 alone seeing a 53% year-over-year increase, driven by both expanded programming and significantly higher attendance per event.

This trajectory demonstrates not only consistent growth, but also improved effectiveness—as generally we have grown without adding additional cost for the events.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

The Court is actively seeking community partners to help continue this momentum:

- **Host a Clinic:** Organizations with space for approximately 30–40 people can host a Family Law Clinic at their location.
- **Invite the Conversation:** Groups without space are encouraged to invite Judge Cook to speak about access to justice, community trust, and innovative court outreach.
- **Support the Work:** Attorneys willing to donate just two hours of pro bono time are essential to the success of each clinic.
- **Expand the Impact:** Service-oriented organizations are invited to pair clinics with additional resources—housing, health, education, or financial services.

"Thank you to all the hosts, community partners and the Ohio Justice Bus! A special thank you to the the lawyers that volunteered their time and talent, providing free legal advise to those in need"

Katarina Cook
Administrative Judge

Volunteer Attorneys - Thank you

Charles Budde, Grisi & Budde
Casey Cerreta, Casey Law Firm
Guenna Conte, Grisi & Budde
Jessica Didion, Didion & Green, LLC
Roe Fox, Hobson Rsnick Fox & Kolligian, LLC
Leslie Graske, Leslie S. Graske, LLC
John Green, Didion & Green, LLC
Morgan Hellgreen, Zukerman Law
Susan Lawko, Susan Lawko, LLC
Sue Lax, Susan Lax Law, LLC
Lindsay Leonard, Kennedy & Collins
Dave Looney, Law Office of David Looney
Hugh McDaniel, McDaniel Law Corp
Adam Morris, Randal Lowry & Associates
Mialon Morris, L. Mialon Morris, Esq.
Deb Ruby, Ruby and Associates
Rebecca Sremack, Sremack Law Firm, LLC
Joy Wagner, Joy S. Wagner & Associates

Community Partners - Thank you

Community Legal Aid – Advocates for Equal Justice
summit DD – Developmental Disabilities Board
Akron-Summit County Public Library
hope & HEALING – Survivor Resource Center
CYOP – Carve Your Own Path
Founded 1875 – akron bar association
Barberton Public Library
Twinsburg Public Library
victim assistance program
PortagePath Behavioral Health
Elliot Kolkovich – Summit County Prosecutor – Child Support Enforcement Agency
MAN2MAN Fatherhood Initiative
Citizen Circles