



Second Judicial Circuit of Florida

May 1, 2026

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Paula Wright (Watkins) @ office 850.606.4422
e-mail watkinsp@leoncountyfl.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May is Problem-Solving Court Month In Florida

Problem-Solving Court Month for Florida is our chance to recognize and celebrate the work of recovery happening in treatment courts right here in our community, as well as across the nation. Let's celebrate the courts of second chances!

- ***Felony Drug Court – Leon County Administrative Judge Nina Ashenafi-Richardson***
- ***Juvenile Drug Court – Circuit Judge Andrew T. Sheeran***
- ***Veterans' Treatment Court – Leon County Judge LaShawn D. Donald (Riggans)***
- ***Early Childhood Court – Circuit Judge Barbara K. Hobbs***
- ***Mental Health Program – Gadsden County Circuit Judge Ronald W. Flury***
- ***Mental Health Program – Leon County Judge Carlos A. Rey***

Treatment Courts Save Lives and Strengthen Communities

Over the last three decades, there has been a growing movement to transform the way the justice system responds to substance use and mental health disorders. Rather than continuing the revolving door of addiction and related crime, treatment courts break the cycle by holding individuals accountable while connecting them with the treatment and support needed to change their lives. This approach is no longer an experiment - more than 4,000 treatment courts across the nation have proven to be the most successful justice intervention in our nation's history. May is National Treatment Court Month and the perfect opportunity to shed light on how this approach is saving lives and making our community safer.

Here in the 2nd Judicial Circuit, there are three treatment courts for drug and alcohol-related criminal cases. Felony Drug Court, Veterans' Treatment Court and Juvenile Drug Court. Treatment courts like ours differ from traditional court because we invite treatment providers and other public health professionals to be part of a therapeutic team. They ensure each person in treatment court receives an individualized, evidence-based treatment plan. The team also includes the judge, defense attorneys, prosecutors, probation officers and law enforcement, who, together with the treatment provider, collaboratively provide ongoing support and accountability. This approach allows the treatment court team to work together to identify and meet individual needs beyond clinical treatment, such as education, employment, housing assistance, family reunification and healthcare.

Prepared by: Leon County Administrative Judge Nina Ashenafi-Richardson (Felony Drug Court Judge)