



Administrative Office of the Court  
**The Sixth Judicial Circuit of Florida**

14250 49th Street North, Suite 2000  
Clearwater, Florida 33762  
(727) 453-7176  
Fax: (727) 453-7166

**Gay Lynne Inskeep**  
Trial Courts Administrator

**Public Information Office**

## **Sixth Judicial Circuit Wins \$600,000 Federal Grant For New Family Dependency Drug Court**

CLEARWATER - Thanks to a \$600,000 three-year grant federal grant, the Sixth Judicial Circuit is setting up a new family dependency drug court in Pinellas County.

The grant goes into effect Oct. 1, 2016, and the court itself is expected to start handling cases in January, 2017. Pinellas-Pasco Circuit Judge Patrice Moore will be the presiding judge.

In a family dependency drug court, the judge ensures a child who has been abused, neglected or abandoned, at least in part due to their parents' substance abuse, is placed in a safe and secure environment while services are provided so the parents can deal with their drug addiction.

Ideally, the parents and child are reunited once the parents are found to no longer be using drugs.

The grant, awarded by the U.S. Department of Justice through its Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, will pay for, among other things, outpatient and home-based counseling courtesy of the WestCare Foundation.



Judge Patrice Moore

The court is designed to serve 105 people.



Judge Shawn Crane

A similar court has already been set up in Pasco County, thanks to a separate \$975,000 federal grant, with Pinellas-Pasco Shawn Crane beginning to hear cases in the first week of October 2016.

That program is designed to serve 50 families.

Much like the one designed for Pinellas County, the family dependency treatment court in New Port Richey first has a participant evaluated by a licensed treatment provider. The treatment provider then makes a recommendation to the judge that may range from outpatient meetings twice a week to a six-month residential program.

There are frequent status checks in court so the staff can closely monitor a parent's progress and see how well they are doing as they work toward meeting the requirements of their case plan.

All of the information is presented to the judge, who then either rewards a parent for the progress made, or sanctions them for failing to meet all their designated goals, such as the one requiring a participant remain drug-free.

If a parent is doing well, the judge may increase the number of visits with the child allowed, reduce the number of times a parent has to appear in court, advance the parent to a different treatment phase, or even agree to return the child to the parent. If the parent is not meeting all the demands of their plan, the judge can increase the length or intensity of the treatment program, or even remove the parent from the drug dependency court.