

NEWS RELEASE

ARIZONA SUPREME COURT

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Judge Million Lands Half-Million in Grant Dollars to Support Specialty Domestic Violence Court

TUCSON – Tucson City Court this month received a three-year \$497,000 Justice for Families grant. The grant is from the US Department of Justice Office of Violence Against Women and is the second such grant that Tucson City Court has earned. The grant will be used to continue the specialty domestic violence court program.

Judge Wendy Million launched a specialty court to handle domestic violence cases in 2013. Domestic Violence Court is not a separate building, rather it is a program that bundles all serious domestic violence cases on one judge’s calendar. Instead of spreading these cases among several judges, Judge Million hears all of these cases and works with advocacy groups to provide services to victims of domestic violence.

“The idea is to be able to provide a social and community safety net to families and individuals touched by domestic violence,” Judge Million explained. “This new grant allows me to continue having a dedicated domestic violence court. The money will be used to help with extra security in the courtroom and for continuing education programs for judges, court staff, and attorneys who handle these cases. It also funds two victim advocates from *Emerge! Center Against Domestic Abuse* who will work at City Court.”

According to its website, the *Emerge! Center Against Domestic Abuse* is a Tucson-based charitable organization that is the largest provider of domestic abuse prevention services in Southern Arizona. Judge Million said the two victim advocates will float between the court’s protective order office and the courtroom to provide direct aid to victims.

The grant will also allow Judge Million to continue doing outreach to the Deaf and hard-of-hearing. National studies have shown that deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals experience a greater incidence of domestic violence, which often goes unreported. Judge Million plans to use some funds to pay for American Sign Language interpreters when domestic violence victims with a hearing impairment need court services.

Judge Million plans to keep focusing on ways to inspire offenders to successfully complete probation and reduce re-offense rates.

“During our first three years of operation, when offenders have successfully completed review hearings with the court and completed their domestic violence treatment, there have been very low levels of re-offense. This keeps victims safer and makes the offenders more productive members of society,” she explained.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month making the grant award even more special to Judge Million.

“These are cases that can keep you up at night,” Judge Million said. “Being able to continue helping victims and families affected by domestic violence means the world to me – but also to the staff who work to keep our residents safe or help them recover from violence and trauma.”

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