



For Immediate Release

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***Summit County Court of Common Pleas General Division
Announces a New Partner in Providing
Career Coaching and Placement for Probationers***

Administrative Judge Amy Corrigan Jones is pleased to announce the Summit County Court of Common Pleas Adult Probation Department is collaborating with Future Plans to increase services for probationers in Intervention in Lieu of Conviction (ILC).

In recent years, Ohio has expanded its ILC statute, benefitting defendants across the State. ILC allows certain offenders to receive assistance or treatment to avoid a felony conviction. ILC is not designed as punishment; rather, it is an opportunity for people to address the underlying issues that contributed to their criminal charges. This population of probationers have shown their alcohol or substance use contributed to the criminal behavior. They have shown remorse and a desire to get treatment for their substance use with a goal to successfully complete probation and then never be involved in the criminal justice system again.

“This is an opportunity for us to coach and teach individuals and help them be successful,” stated Corrigan Jones.

Jones continued, “Judge Mary Margaret Rowlands reached out to me about this opportunity for our probationers and we met with the Future Plans team. Let me say, the program they described is something not currently available to probationers in Summit County, and we are excited to offer this to our ILC participants.”

Judge Rowlands, who also presides over a Reentry Court Specialized Docket, first heard about the Future Plans concept through her collaboration with Julie Jones on a local nonprofit board. During a casual conversation Jones, the Future Plans Partnership Development Director, brought up her work at Future Plans. Judge Rowlands immediately recognized the potential to fill a critical gap in services at the Common Pleas Court.

The Future Plans Program enhances participants' ability to eventually secure employment in a chosen career field. Future Plans provides an assessment, coaching, and working with local and state business partners, career based employment placement. The assessment matches individuals to 50 in-demand jobs that are updated through the Department of Labor on a regular basis. Once participants identify which career field or occupation would be best for them, the software connects them to both training and education providers as well as employers who are currently hiring in the region or for remote workers. The information is in-depth, yet straightforward and easily explained to clients as part of the coaching and mentoring provided.

“As judges, we see barriers to success, not only while on probation, but also after, and gainful employment is key. When people are employed in work that is meaningful to them, they have hope. Hope for growth, increased income, healthcare, retirement, stability – it is invaluable to success and a key ingredient to staying out of the criminal justice system,” said Rowlands.

The Future Plans Program will initially provide assessments for 80 participants. Director of Offender Services, Kerri Defibaugh explained, “We will be identifying a population of participants that are presently displaying a moderate to high risk need of assistance in employment coaching. The connectivity between the participant and Future Plans is an additional layer in of support offered to our participants to help them be successful.”

“We will communicate with and monitor the first group of participants closely in order to get feedback and input on the program.” Defibaugh continued, “While we are grateful to have many local agencies we successfully partner with, Future Plans uses a different approach to job placement, one that we are optimistic will make a tremendous difference in the lives of the participants.”

Participants are provided the assessment, up to four Coaching Sessions, access to five Essential Skills Courses. The goals of the program include:

- Participants complete their assessment and complete an education and career plan;
- Participants complete at least two Essential Skills Course for a micro-credential;
- Participants begin an education or career pathway.

Program participants receive coaching from trained providers as needed throughout the process. During the first 3 months of the program, participants are assessed and create a plan. In the following 3 months, participants complete two courses and receive coaching to start their plan. In the final 6 months of the program, participants work on training and/or employment and complete appropriate Essential Skills Courses as needed.

Dr. Denise Reading, Chief Executive Officer of Future Plans said, “We have had great success with all of these tools in a wide variety of settings in Ohio.” Future Plans is currently working with partners in Adams, Brown, Portage, Cuyahoga, Highland, Lawrence, Lucas, Jackson, Scioto, Summit, and Washington Counties.

Julie Jones, Future Plans Partnership Development Director explained, “The tools and their related outcomes are not bound by socioeconomic status, education level, gender or race. We are certain that the information people gain about themselves helps to empower them and can be a catalyst to help move them forward and away from the court system.”

In her role as Administrative Judge, Corrigall Jones has consistently sought out ways to improve services and programming in the court.

“We want our ILC participants to have help in starting on their determined career pathway; where they can have an increased sense of purpose in this area of their lives and success in staying out of the criminal justice system,” concluded Corrigall Jones.

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