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Attorney General Griffin Announces Grant from State Opioid Settlement Funds to Arkansas Specialty Courts Program

Griffin: 'Providing these resources to our Specialty Courts will better equip them and increase the number of lives that are being transformed'

LITTLE ROCK – Attorney General Tim Griffin today issued the following statement announcing a grant of up to \$1 million from state opioid settlement funds to the Arkansas Specialty Courts Program:

“Specialty Courts play a critical role in Arkansas’s justice system. They provide paths for certain offenders, typically those who have struggled with substance abuse, to get treatment and training to put them on a path that leads to restoration and health instead of recidivism and suffering.

“I am pleased to announce a grant of up to \$1 million from my office to fund opioid-related supportive and restorative services through the Arkansas Specialty Courts Program. This grant will provide Specialty Court Judges a source of funding to pay for approved services for drug court participants on an ongoing basis. This approach ensures that the money follows those who need help the most and will be used to provide critical services such as transitional housing for

participants, mental health treatment and substance abuse recovery, community mentors and peer recovery support services, and transportation assistance.

“Providing these resources to our Specialty Courts will better equip them and increase the number of lives that are being transformed.”

Judge Candice Settle, Circuit Court Judge for the 21st Judicial Circuit, issued the following statement:

“As a Circuit Court Judge with a Specialty Court docket, I am appreciative of the generous allocation of funds from the Attorney General. Arkansans who are suffering from addiction across the State will benefit greatly from these funds. Thank you to Attorney General Griffin for these resources that will allow our Court and others to give people an opportunity to change the direction of their lives.”

Marty Sullivan, Director of the Arkansas Administrative Office of the Courts, issued the following the statement:

“First and foremost, on behalf of our state’s Specialty Court Judges—who are operating more than 100 treatment courts around the state—I would like to thank Attorney General Tim Griffin for his support. The awarding of this grant is not simply a financial gesture; it is a testament to the shared belief that restorative justice can transform lives, heal families, and uplift entire communities. These courts provide a second chance to individuals who have found themselves on a difficult path. Through evidence-based interventions, comprehensive treatment, and accountability, our Specialty Court Judges and their treatment teams are making a lasting difference in the lives of Arkansans.”

The grant will come from the state’s portion of opioid settlement funds, which is managed by the Office of the Attorney General.

About the Arkansas Specialty Court Program

Arkansas specialty courts address the root causes of justice system involvement through specialized dockets, multidisciplinary teams, and a non-adversarial approach. Offering evidence-based treatment, judicial supervision, and accountability, specialty courts provide individualized interventions for participants, thereby improving public safety, reducing recidivism, restoring lives, and promoting confidence and satisfaction with the justice system process.

Specialty courts focus on addressing underlying issues such as substance abuse, mental health conditions, or veteran-related challenges, to reduce recidivism and improve long-term outcomes for participants. Specialty courts typically involve a collaborative approach, with judges, attorneys, program coordinators, probation officers, treatment providers, and other professionals working together to help individuals access the services and support they need to overcome their challenges. Examples of specialty courts in Arkansas include adult and juvenile drug courts, HOPE and Swift courts, DWI courts, mental health courts, veterans' treatment courts, and family treatment courts.

Most specialty court programs are voluntary, fourteen-to-eighteen-month, multi-phase intervention programs for individuals involved in the criminal justice system due to unmanaged substance use or mental health disorders. These programs involve frequent court appearances, random drug/alcohol testing, intensive community supervision and case management, and extensive substance use disorder treatment, including individual and group counseling. Specialty courts help connect participants to community services and support, saving their lives, families, and futures while effectively preserving tax dollars.

About Attorney General Tim Griffin

Tim Griffin was sworn in as the 57th Attorney General of Arkansas on January 10, 2023, having previously served as the state's 20th Lieutenant Governor from 2015-2023. From 2011-2015, Griffin served as the 24th representative of Arkansas's Second Congressional District, where he served on the House Committee on Ways and Means, House Armed Services Committee, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, House Committee on Ethics and House Committee on the Judiciary while also serving as a Deputy Whip for the Majority.

Griffin has served as an officer in the U.S. Army Reserve Judge Advocate General's (JAG) Corps for more than 28 years and currently holds the rank of colonel. In 2005, Griffin was mobilized to active duty as an Army prosecutor at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, and served with the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) in Mosul, Iraq.

He is currently serving as the Commander of the 2d Legal Operations Detachment in New Orleans, Louisiana. His previous assignments include serving as the Commander of the 134th Legal Operations Detachment at Fort Liberty (née Bragg), North Carolina, and as a Senior Legislative Advisor to the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness at the Pentagon. Griffin earned a master's degree in strategic studies as a Distinguished Honor Graduate from the U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.

Griffin also served as U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas, and Special Assistant to the President and Deputy Director of Political Affairs for President George W. Bush; Special Assistant to Assistant Attorney General Michael Chertoff, Criminal Division, U.S. Department of Justice; Special Assistant U.S. Attorney, U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Arkansas; Senior Investigative Counsel, Government Reform and Oversight Committee, U.S. House of Representatives; and Associate Independent Counsel, Office of Independent Counsel David M. Barrett, In re: HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros.

Griffin is a graduate of Magnolia High School, Hendrix College in Conway, and Tulane Law School in New Orleans. He attended graduate school at Oxford University. He is admitted to practice law in Arkansas (active) and Louisiana (inactive). Griffin lives in Little Rock with his wife, Elizabeth, a Camden native, and their three children.

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