

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**  
**Bluefield State College**  
**and**  
**Mercer County Circuit Court**

WHEREAS, Bluefield State College and the Mercer County Circuit Court have come together to collaborate with Empowering Appalachian Families of Mercer County, as Bluefield State College applies for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services grant HHS-2019-ACF-ACYF-CA-1559.

WHEREAS, the partners listed below have agreed to enter a collaborative agreement in which Bluefield State College will be the lead agency and named applicant and the Mercer County Circuit Court will be noted in the application proposal as a collaborative member of Empowering Appalachian Families; and

WHEREAS, the partners herein desire to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding setting forth the services to be provided by the collaborative; and

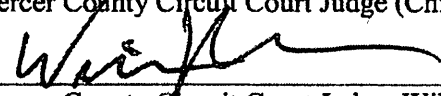
Bluefield State College, through its Minority Institutes and service to the Mercer County community, has a long history of collaborating with agencies on behalf of the families and individuals in Mercer County. Bluefield State College will share ongoing collaboration with the Mercer County Circuit Court to support the Empowering Appalachian Families of Mercer County project.

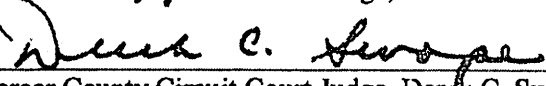
NOW, THEREFORE, it is hereby agreed that the Mercer County Circuit Court will do the following:


- Enter such administrative orders as are appropriate within the exercise of sound judicial discretion to lawfully obtain all such services that are available to assist in achieving the goals of the Mercer County, West Virginia (“Mercer County”), collaborative prevention model (“Empowering Appalachian Families”) and to avoid, whenever possible and in the best interest of the child, adversarial court proceedings and family separation.
- Provide judicial leadership in Mercer County and assist in obtaining community partners to collaborate with the efforts of Empowering Appalachian Families.
- Provide data to Empowering Appalachian Families that is relevant and needed to assist Empowering Appalachian Families achieve its goal. Notwithstanding, data sealed from the public shall not be provided.
- Educate the legal community, including but not limited to the Mercer County Bar, West Virginia State Bar, and every level of the state judiciary in West Virginia, on the goals and procedures of Empowering Appalachian Families; and educate law enforcement on the goals and procedures of Empowering Appalachian Families.
- Ensure that all actions taken by the Court under this Memorandum of Understanding are lawful and appropriate within the bounds of the West Virginia Code of Judicial Conduct.

The roles and responsibilities described above are contingent upon Bluefield State College receiving funds requested for the proposed project described in the grant proposal. Responsibilities under this Memorandum of Understanding would coincide with the project period.

By:   
Mercer County Circuit Court Judge (Chief), Mark Wills

  
Mercer County Circuit Court Judge, William J. Sadler

  
Mercer County Circuit Court Judge, Derek C. Swope

By:   
Signing Official: Dr. Ted Lewis, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Bluefield State College