



# Blount County Government

TO: Blount County Commissioners

FROM: Blount County Juvenile Court  
Blount County General Sessions Court  
Blount County Sheriff's Office

RE: Court Officer—Required by Statute

DATE: July 18, 2024

1. Background: Blount County Juvenile Court consists of three judicial officers: an elected General Sessions Judge who exercises concurrent jurisdiction over Juvenile Court, and two Juvenile Magistrate Judges. Juvenile Magistrate Judges exercise the same jurisdiction and preside over the same cases as the elected judge. Juvenile Magistrate Judges are judicial officers and are subject to the Code of Judicial Conduct. Prior to 2020, Blount County Juvenile Court's judicial officers consisted of the elected Judge and a single Juvenile Magistrate Judge. In 2020, a part-time Juvenile Magistrate Judge position was added. In 2021, a third courtroom was added to the second floor of the Courthouse. In 2023, the part-time Juvenile Magistrate Judge position was changed to a full-time position. Pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated sections 8-8-201(a)(2), 16-15-715, and 37-1-213, the Sheriff is required to provide an officer for each courtroom when it is in session.
2. History: The request for another court officer to serve in Juvenile Court has been made several times. Most recently, the Sheriff's Office requested two new Court Support positions in 2023. This request was denied (See attached).
3. Current Operations: Currently, two court officers are having to divide their time between three courtrooms. Because courts, pursuant to statute, are not permitted not operate without a court officer, the lack of an additional officer has caused delay in the efficient administration of justice. Blount County Juvenile Court presides over cases involving abused and neglected children. Every day, foster parents, Child Protective Service workers, Department of Children's Services case managers, Blount County employees, and other members of the community are present in court. The safety of these individuals is the responsibility of Blount County, and specifically, the Sheriff's Office.
4. Proposal: Blount County Juvenile Court, with the support of the Sheriff's Office, respectfully requests the county to fund a third court officer position to enable the Court to fulfill responsibilities consistent with Tennessee law.

5. Impact if not funded: It will be difficult, if not impossible, for the Blount County Juvenile Court to fulfill its mandate in providing a safe and secure forum for resolution of matters affecting the children and families of Blount County.



Signature from Department Head/Elected (or designee)