



NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oct. 22, 2026

Bedford County Courts Welcome First Court Facility Dog

Harrisburg—Bedford County’s Court of Common Pleas will welcome Martin, the county’s first court facility dog, during a ceremonial swearing-in today at **1 p.m.**, in Courtroom No. 1 at the Bedford County Courthouse.

Certified through Susquehanna Service Dogs, Martin will work alongside the Bedford County Probation Office and the Court of Common Pleas to provide comfort and support to individuals and families navigating court proceedings, probation appointments and other court-related services.

The Court Facility Dog Program, administered by the Bedford County Probation Office, is designed to help reduce stress and anxiety and create a more supportive environment for people interacting with the court system.

“Court proceedings can be stressful for children, families, and many other individuals. We are pleased to welcome Martin as another resource to help those people feel more comfortable and supported as they navigate the court process,” said President Judge Travis Livengood. “Martin’s presence will help us build trust, create a calmer environment, and support better results for everyone across numerous court settings.”

Meet Martin

Martin is a specially trained and certified court facility dog through Susquehanna Service Dogs. He will work with two trained and certified handlers from the Bedford County Probation Office.

On a typical day, Martin's work may take him into a variety of court-related settings, including:

- Family court proceedings involving children
- Treatment Court team meetings and court sessions
- Criminal court proceedings
- Juvenile dependency and delinquency proceedings
- Guardianship proceedings involving elderly and incapacitated people

Martin’s role is to provide comfort and support through his presence. He is not a therapy dog and does not provide clinical treatment.

When Martin is working, he will wear a harness that identifies him as a working dog engaged in animal-assisted activities.

Participation is voluntary

Interactions with Martin are strictly voluntary. Designated areas where Martin will not be present will be available for individuals who have allergies, fear dogs, or prefer not to interact with him.

The program is intended to provide an additional resource for individuals who may benefit from Martin's presence while respecting the needs and preferences of everyone who enters the courthouse.

All program expenses, including Martin's training, supplies, veterinary care and grooming, will be funded through Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency grants, donations and the court's Supervisory Fund.

Editor's Note:

Please see attached photos of Martin (and his handler, Probation Officer Codi Spengler).

The ceremony is not an official court proceeding; therefore, members of the media **are invited** to photograph and record the event and to interview court officials and Martin's handlers.

However, media access to subsequent court proceedings will be subject to applicable court rules and any restrictions established by the court.

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(Martin with handler Codi)

