



# **SHERRI BEVAN WALSH**

## **SUMMIT COUNTY PROSECUTOR**

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Thursday, October 29, 2020

## **Prosecutor Walsh’s Child Support Enforcement Agency Wins National Award for Innovative Solution**

AKRON, Ohio (Thursday, October 29, 2020) – Summit County Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh announced today that the National Child Support Enforcement Agency chose the Summit County Child Support Enforcement Agency for having the best innovative solution in solving a problem impacting local families. The award was announced today during the NCSEA’s first ever Inspire Event.

On May 11, 2020, the Summit County Child Support Enforcement Agency began conducting Drive-Up DNA testing to assist families in establishing paternity. Half of the Agency’s cases begin with establishing paternity. Restrictions put in place by Ohio’s Governor to slow the spread of COVID-19 put a stop to DNA testing. The Drive-Up DNA testing was needed to fill this critical need during the COVID-19 pandemic while following newly established health guidelines to keep employees and the public safe.

“I am so proud of all my employees. This award is in recognition for all the innovative and progressive work happening in my office. My Child Support Enforcement Agency fights for families who desperately need help,” said Prosecutor Walsh. “Using Drive-Up DNA testing not only establishes paternity, but helps protect families when it comes to certain legal rights and provides them access to benefits.”

The NCSEA received submissions from Child Support Enforcement Agencies from across the country for a national “Hackathon”. The “Hacks” looked at innovative ways to find solutions to problems or challenges in their community as a result of the pandemic.

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Prosecutor Walsh's Child Support Enforcement Agency was one of only four child support agencies in the country chosen to present the "hack" during the NCSEA's Inspire live event on October 29, 2020. The ideas were reviewed by a panel of judges who chose the Summit County's innovative program as the best solution.

The Summit County Child Support Enforcement Agency DNA testing is conducted by **DRIVE-UP** and **APPOINTMENT ONLY** and abides by state health guidelines issued for the COVID-19 pandemic. Since its inception, 524 people have been tested through the Drive-Up DNA program.

Testing takes place on the M1 level of the Summit County Parking Deck. A designated area is blocked off specifically for genetic testing. Upon completion of the testing, clients are provided a parking voucher, with a limit of 30 minutes, which will allow them to leave the parking deck free of charge.

The lab technician is located on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the Ohio Building and will greet clients at their vehicles.

The address for the Summit County Parking Deck is 200 South High Street. Vehicles must use the public entrance on South High Street and follow the signs to the testing site on level M1.

This is a **Drive-Up, Appointment Only** option. Those who do not have a scheduled appointment will not be tested. If a client is unable to take advantage of the **Drive-Up, Appointment Only** option or they are unable to appear at the scheduled date and time, they should contact CSEA at 330.643.2765 to make other arrangements.

#### **About Summit County CSEA**

The Summit County Child Support Enforcement Agency collects over \$74 million annually and handles more than 45,000 child support cases. Each year it establishes paternity or support orders for nearly 4,000 children. Since its inception in 2001, the Criminal Non-Support program has collected \$50 million through its aggressive prosecution of individuals neglecting to pay child support. You can learn more about CSEA on its website: <http://co.summitoh.net/prosecutor/index.php/divisions/child-support-enforcement>.