

THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA
ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 1.03

ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN

WHEREAS, the Florida Rules of Judicial Administration 2.215 requires the Chief Judge to develop an administrative plan for the efficient and effective administration of the Courts and judicial resources within the Circuit; and

WHEREAS, the administrative plan provides for the general operational policies of the Court including the assignment of Judges to divisions, the prompt disposition of cases, control of the dockets, and regulation of the use of court facilities, and other administrative matters detailed in the plan; it is therefore

ORDERED:

The administrative plan for the operation of the Eighth Judicial Circuit is as follows:

I. DESCRIPTION OF THE CIRCUIT

The Eighth Judicial Circuit is composed of six (6) counties: Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Levy, Gilchrist, and Union. The Circuit is divided into three (3) regions for administrative purposes:

Northern Region - Baker, Bradford, and Union Counties
Central Region - Alachua County
Western Region - Levy and Gilchrist Counties

There are twenty-three (23) Judges in the Eighth Judicial Circuit, thirteen (13) Circuit Judges and ten (10) County Court Judges. The Central Region is designated as the headquarters of the Eighth Judicial Circuit. All of the Circuit Judges' headquarters are designated in the Central Region, Alachua County (Gainesville).

There are five (5) Alachua County Court Judges and one (1) County Court Judge in each of the five (5) regional counties of Baker, Bradford, Levy, Gilchrist, and Union.

II. EQUITABLE DELIVERY OF CIRCUIT COURT SERVICES

The Eighth Judicial Circuit is comprised of six (6) diverse and distinctively unique counties with different needs and political environments. The Court is committed to the equitable delivery of Circuit Court services and programs to all citizens in each county of the Circuit.

The Court is committed to providing sufficient Circuit Judges for each of the smaller five (5) counties of Baker, Bradford, Union, Levy, and Gilchrist. At least two (2) Circuit Judges will have assignments in the western region, with the Judges' official headquarters in Alachua County (Gainesville), and at least two (2) Circuit Judges will have assignments in the northern region, with the Judges' official headquarters in the Alachua County (Gainesville).

Circuit Judges assigned to the western or northern regions will have their assignments rotated pursuant to the rotation policy described below.

III. DIVISIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS

The Circuit Court is divided into Criminal, Family, Civil, Probate, and Appellate divisions. The County Court is divided into Criminal and Civil divisions.

The Circuit and County Court Assignments are described in Schedule "A" attached.

IV. ROTATION OF JUDGE ASSIGNMENTS

Judges are generalists and their assignments are rotated. Generally, the assignments are for two to three years and are staggered. The length of the assignment and the division of Court may vary depending upon special circumstances of the Court and the specific needs of a Judge.

Judges who are new to the Circuit bench are generally assigned to an Alachua County assignment to provide the Judge with mentoring and support from his or her colleagues.

V. APPEALS - COUNTY TO CIRCUIT

Appeals from County Court to Circuit Court are heard by a panel of three (3) judges. Circuit Judges are assigned to a panel and these assignments are rotated annually.

VI. JUDGES' MEETINGS

Judges' meetings shall be held quarterly and include all Circuit and County Court Judges. At least one (1) Judges' meeting shall be in the northern or western region every year when practicable.

VII. ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGES

Administrative Judges are responsible for the organization and delivery of court services on behalf of the Chief Judge. In this capacity, the Administrative Judges are responsible for the oversight and case management of their divisions.

There shall be Administrative Judges for the following:

- (1) Circuit Civil
- (2) Circuit Family
- (3) Circuit Criminal
- (4) Alachua County Court
- (5) Regional County Court

VIII. COUNTY COURT JUDGES ACTING AS TEMPORARY CIRCUIT JUDGES

County Court Judges are temporarily appointed as Acting Circuit Judges and asked to cover Circuit cases throughout the six (6) counties as back-up trial Judges and as special limited needs arise.

IX. SENIOR JUDGES

Senior Judges are a resource for the Court assigned by the Chief Judge to cover assignments as needed.

X. GENERAL MAGISTRATES/JUDICIAL HEARING OFFICERS

General Magistrates and Judicial Hearing Officers support the Family, Civil, and Traffic Divisions. General Magistrates and Judicial Hearing Officers are managed by the Chief Judge, with judicial oversight by the Administrative Judge.

XI. STAFF ATTORNEYS

Staff Attorneys support the workload of the Circuit Judges and County Court Judges. Staff Attorneys are managed by the Chief Judge, with judicial oversight by the Administrative Judges. Staff Attorneys are assigned to the following divisions:

- (1) Family
- (2) Civil/Probate
- (3) Appellate
- (4) Criminal

XII. FIRST APPEARANCE

A. Alachua County

All Circuit and County Court Judges in Alachua County shall take weekend/holiday duty for first appearance equally and will be assigned by rotation.

B. Regional Counties

The first appearance duty in the regional counties is assigned to the County Court Judge for the county.

XIII. SPECIALTY COURTS

The Court is committed to the support of the Specialty Courts. The Eighth Judicial Circuit has the following Specialty Courts:

- (1) Adult Drug Court (Alachua County)
- (2) Juvenile Delinquency Drug Court (Alachua County)
- (3) Mental Health Court (Alachua County)
- (4) Adult Drug Court (Baker County)
- (5) Adult Drug Court (Bradford County)
- (6) Veterans Treatment Court (Alachua County)

XIV. UNIFIED FAMILY COURT

The Eighth Judicial Circuit has implemented a Unified Family Court. Family cases are screened for related cases. Related cases are assigned following a policy of “one family one judge”.

A major component of the Unified Family Court is case management. Through a cooperative effort between the Clerks Office in the Circuit, Court Technology, Family Court, and Department of Children and Families, one set of data has been developed, docket codes are being placed on the orders, and some form orders have been drafted. This has allowed for reports on caseloads to be generated so that staff has a more realistic idea of the number of active cases. Court staff can review the cases and make recommendations to the division Judge, alerting him/her to cases that should be closed or need to be referred to another agency.

XV. CASE MANAGEMENT

Cases are expected to be resolved timely. Resolving cases timely requires judicial commitment, technology, technology staff, case managers, and quality data entry by the Clerk

of Court. The Court will continue to develop the technology resources and foster the judicial commitment for case management.

XVI. CHIEF JUDGE - COURT ADMINISTRATOR - CLERKS OF COURT

In a continuing effort to facilitate communication and cooperation, there will be quarterly meetings with the six (6) Clerks of Court, Chief Judge, and Trial Court Administrator. The meetings provide a forum for the discussion of issues of mutual concern and common interests.

XVII. SECURITY

The public, attorneys, litigants, staff, jurors and judges shall be safe and secure in all courthouses. There shall be consistent procedures and practices for court security throughout the Circuit implemented through administrative orders.

This Order replaces Administrative Order No. 1.03 (v1) entitled "Administrative Plan" entered on October 5, 2012.

ORDERED ON this 11th day of March, 2015 *nunc pro tunc* to March 1, 2015.



Robert E. Roundtree, Jr., Chief Judge

**SCHEDULE "A"
ASSIGNMENTS**

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Number of Judges/ General Magistrates/ Judicial Hearing Officers</u>	<u>Description</u>
<u>Alachua County</u> Extraordinary Writs Juvenile Delinquency	1 – Chief Judge	The Chief Judge has responsibility for Extraordinary Writ cases and Juvenile Delinquency in Alachua County.
<u>Circuit Criminal</u> Felony Jimmy Ryce Adult Drug Court Felony Forensic Post-Conviction	4 – Judges	There are four assignments in Alachua County. Each assignment is paired with a regional criminal assignment: Baker/Bradford, Union, Gilchrist and Levy.
<u>Family</u> Unified Family Court Dissolution of Marriage Domestic Violence Juvenile Dependency Juvenile Delinquency Dependency Drug Court Delinquency Drug Court Adoptions Name Changes Child Support CINS/FINS	6 – Judges 2 - General Magistrates 3 - Judicial Hearing Officers	There are four assignments in Alachua County and one in Baker/ Bradford and one in Gilchrist/Levy. The regional county assignments include the Circuit Civil responsibility.
<u>Circuit Civil</u> Civil Cases Probate and Guardianship	2 – Judges	There are two equal Circuit Civil assignments in Alachua County. Circuit Civil assignments in the regional counties are the responsibility of the Judge assigned to Family cases.
<u>County Criminal</u> Misdemeanor Cases Mental Health Court	3 – Judges	There are three equal County Court Criminal assignments in Alachua County.

**SCHEDULE "A"
ASSIGNMENTS**

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Number of Judges/ General Magistrates/ Judicial Hearing Officers</u>	<u>Description</u>
County Civil	2 – Judges 1 - Civil Traffic Hearing Officers	There are two equal County Court Civil assignments in Alachua County. The part-time Civil Traffic Infraction Hearing Officer is in Alachua County.
County Criminal and Civil	5 – Judges	There is a County Court Judge in each of following: Baker, Bradford, Union, Gilchrist and Levy Counties.
TOTAL	23 – Circuit Judges 10 – County Court Judges	