

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, mandatory periodic review of the status of the inmates of the county jail, and regulation of the use of court facilities, including courtrooms and hearing rooms, 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, Gilchrist, Levy, 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 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 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, and Appellate divisions. Various subdivisions are grouped under these general headings, pursuant to Administrative Order 9.01, Assignment of Alachua County Circuit and County Cases to Divisions. The County Court is divided into Criminal and Civil divisions.

The Circuit and County Court Assignments are as described in Administrative Order 9.03, General Assignments.

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.

V. NEW JUDGES

Judges who are new to the Circuit Court bench are generally assigned an Alachua County Circuit Court assignment to provide the judge with mentoring and support from his or her colleagues. Each new Circuit Judge will be assigned a mentor judge appropriate to the division assigned.

VI. APPEALS - COUNTY TO CIRCUIT

An appellate panel shall convene four times per year to hear appeals from County Court to Circuit Court. Each appellate case shall be assigned to an appellate panel consisting of three Circuit Judges. The panels will be assigned in the General Assignment of Judges Administrative Order and will include the assignment of a "Primary Judge" for each panel. See Administrative Order 2.01, Appellate Procedures. A staff attorney is assigned to assist in the appellate process.

VII. 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.

VIII. 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. Administrative Judges shall meet with the Chief Judge quarterly, when practicable.

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
- (6) Appellate Division

IX. 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.

X. SENIOR JUDGES

Senior Judges are a resource for the Court assigned by the Chief Judge to cover assignments as needed. A Senior Judge Coordinator shall be designated and shall secure coverage as needed.

XI. GENERAL MAGISTRATES/JUDICIAL HEARING OFFICERS

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

XII. 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) Probate and Guardianship
- (3) Civil

- (4) Appellate
- (5) Criminal

XIII. FIRST APPEARANCE

First appearance during normal business hours in Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Gilchrist, Levy, and Union Counties will be held in each respective county, unless otherwise indicated in the weekly courtroom assignment calendars.

All Circuit and County Court Judges in the Circuit shall take weekend/holiday duty for first appearance equally and will be assigned by rotation. Weekend/holiday first appearance shall be held in Alachua County for all counties in the Eighth Judicial Circuit, unless special circumstances warrant otherwise.

XIV. DUTY JUDGE ASSIGNMENT

In addition to first appearance coverage on weekends and holidays, a Duty Judge shall be assigned during times when the Court is not open to hear other special or emergency cases, including, but not limited to: Injunctions, shelter hearings, detention hearings, arrest warrants, and search warrants. *See* Administrative Order 9.07, Duty Judge and Emergency Hearing Procedure. The Trial Court Administrator shall designate a Duty Judge Coordinator to ensure access to judicial resources during these times.

XV. SPECIALTY COURTS

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

- (1) Division V- Felony Forensics (Alachua County)
- (2) Felony Adult Drug Court (Alachua County)
- (3) Misdemeanor Mental Health Court (Alachua County)
- (4) Misdemeanor Mental Health Court (Bradford County)
- (5) Misdemeanor Mental Health Court (Levy County)

(6) Veterans Treatment Court (Alachua County)

XVI. UNIFIED FAMILY COURT

The Eighth Judicial Circuit has implemented a Unified Family Court. See Administrative Order 5.01, Unified Family Court. Family cases are screened for related cases. Related cases are then assigned following a policy of “one family one judge.”

A major component of the Unified Family Court is case management. By assigning a single judge to all family cases in each of the counties of the Northern and Western Regions of the Circuit, all family cases are assigned utilizing the “one family, one judge” model. Through a cooperative effort between the Clerks’ Offices in the Circuit, Court Technology, Family Court, and various stakeholder agencies, data is collected and analyzed to enable staff to identify related cases in real time and communicate that information to the appropriate judges and judicial officers. The judicial viewer has been upgraded to include a Unified Family Court report, and several “form orders” for use in Unified Family Court cases. This function shall be used to enable a circuit-wide Unified Family Court.

XVII. CASE MANAGEMENT

It is the responsibility of every judge to ensure that cases assigned to them are resolved timely and that effective case management principles are utilized. The Chief Judge and Trial Court Administrator are committed to providing the technology, case management, and other necessary resources to assist in accomplishing this requirement.

XVIII. PERIODIC REVIEW OF STATUS OF INMATES IN CUSTODY

The Chief Judge or the Chief Judge’s designee will regularly examine the status of every inmate in the county jails in the Circuit. See Administrative Order 4.07, Monitoring Inmates of the Eighth Judicial Circuit.

XIX. CHIEF JUDGE - COURT ADMINISTRATOR - CLERKS OF COURT - SHERIFFS

In a continuing effort to facilitate communication and cooperation, the following shall be held:

- (1) 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.
- (2) Quarterly Court Security meetings in Alachua County.
- (3) Triannual Court-issue meetings in Regional Counties to discuss matters such as court security, emergency management, and facility issues. Attendees at each include the Chief Judge, the Trial Court Administrator, the Clerk of Court, the Sheriff or his/her designee, and others that may have an interest in discussed topics.
- (4) Public Safety Coordinating Council (PSCC) meetings where applicable.

XX. TRIAL COURT ADMINISTRATOR

The Trial Court Administrator works closely with the Chief Judge to oversee all administrative responsibilities of the Circuit. It is the Trial Court Administrator's role to facilitate administrative functions within the Circuit and to develop and carry out policies that enhance court system performance. The Trial Court Administrator reviews pertinent case management reports and statistics to ensure timely disposition of cases. The Trial Court Administrator oversees the following departments within the Court:

- (1) General Magistrates and Hearing Officers
- (2) Administrative Services to include Finance and Accounting, Human Resources, Purchasing
- (3) Self-Help / Pro Se Centers
- (4) Juvenile Alternative Sanction Programs
- (5) Court Interpreting Programs

- (6) Specialty Court Programs
- (7) Staff Attorneys
- (8) Alternative Dispute Resolution and Mediations
- (9) Court Reporting
- (10) Court Technology

The Trial Court Administrator also serves as liaison with city and state agencies, as well as the media and the general public.

XXI. COURT FACILITIES

The Chief Judge, together with the Trial Court Administrator, ensures space for safe and efficient Court operations. This includes the regulation and use of courtrooms, hearing rooms, and other court offices. It is the policy of the Circuit to ensure that courthouse facilities are utilized in adherence with the Canons of Judicial Conduct, to include a general prohibition on political and commercial activity.

XXII. SECURITY

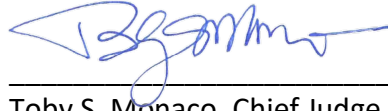
The public, attorneys, litigants, staff, jurors, and judges shall be safe and secure in all courthouses. In coordination with each County Commission, Sheriff's Department, and other appropriate stakeholders, the Court shall establish procedures and practices for court security throughout the Circuit and promulgate them through Administrative Orders.

XXIII. ADMINISTRATIVE ORDERS

In furtherance of the Eighth Judicial Circuit's Administrative Plan, all Administrative Orders are herein incorporated into this Plan. Administrative Orders, and any amendments thereto, can be found on the Circuit's website (excluding those considered confidential under Florida law).

This Order replaces and supersedes Administrative Order No. 1.03 (v2) entitled "Administrative Plan" entered on March 11, 2015.

ORDERED ON this 4th day of December, 2018.



Toby S. Monaco, Chief Judge