

STATE OF MICHIGAN
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE COUNTY OF KENT

BUSINESS COURT PLAN

**LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE
ORDER: 2025-04**

(Rescinds Local Administrative Order 2022-03)

This local administrative order is issued in accordance with MCL 600.8031, et seq, and it establishes the plan for the Business Court in Kent County for the purposes outlined in MCL 600.8033(3). This administrative order replaces all prior local administrative orders addressing the Business Court (formerly known as the “Kent County Specialized Business Docket”).

I. Judicial Resources and Services

The Business Court shall consist of Judge Curt A. Benson, who was appointed by the Michigan Supreme Court. Judge Benson’s percentage of time devoted to the Business Court shall be determined by the Chief Judge of the 17th Circuit Court. Judge Benson is the successor judge to all Business Court cases in the Court’s Case Management System.

II. Cases to be Assigned to the Business Court

- A. Cases eligible to be assigned to the Business Court are identified in MCL 600.8031(2).
- B. A case that is excluded from the Business Court by MCL 600.8031(3) may be reassigned to the Business Court if the assigned judge determines that the case meets the statutory requirements of MCL 600.8035(3). Upon motion of a party, the Chief Judge of the 17th Circuit Court may review assignments to the Business Court under MCL 600.8035(7). The Chief Judge’s ruling under that section is not appealable.

III. Initial Review of Pleadings

The pleadings in each civil case filed in the 17th Circuit Court shall be reviewed by the Business Court judge, who shall determine whether the case meets the requirements for the assignment of the case to the Business Court.

IV. Assignment of Cases to Business Court Judges

- A. Cases shall be assigned to a Business Court judge according to the court’s case-assignment local administrative order.
- B. A case assigned to the business court may be reassigned by blind draw to another judge if the case ceases to include a business or commercial dispute.

C. A case that does not initially include a business or commercial dispute, but that subsequently includes a business or commercial dispute as a result of an amendment, counterclaim, cross-claim, third-party claim, or any other modification of the action, shall be reassigned by blind draw to a Business Court judge.

V. Docket Management

The Business Court judge shall conduct an initial case conference in each case assigned to the Business Court and encourage early facilitative mediation in all cases where resolution through mediation may be accomplished.

VI. Use of Technology

Each Kent County Business Court judge shall provide parties and their attorneys with the opportunity, whenever appropriate, to participate in informal conferences via Zoom. In addition, the Business Court shall maintain an electronic filing system for every document other than the initial pleading submitted in each case assigned to the Business Court.

VII. Publication of Opinions

On each significant matter decided by a Business Court judge, the judge shall publish a written opinion on the searchable database maintained on the Business Court's public website. Additionally, each opinion issued by a Business Court judge shall be sent via e-mail to the State Court Administrative Office for publication on a statewide, indexed website.

VIII. Advisory Committee


A. The Chief Judge of the 17th Circuit Court shall appoint an advisory committee for the Business Court that shall include the Business Court judges, the Court Administrator for the 17th Circuit Court, and at least four civil attorneys actively practicing in Kent County. The advisory committee shall meet on an annual basis to assess the progress of the Business Court.

B. On an annual basis, the advisory committee shall compile a report to be submitted in writing to the 17th Circuit Court and the State Court Administrative Office explaining the activities of the Business Court.

IX. Local Administrative Staff

The Business Court shall provide to the State Court Administrative Office the name of a local staff person who has been designated as the primary contact for the Business Court.

Date: 3/18/2025 | 2:43 PM EDT



Deborah L. McNabb
Chief Circuit Court Judge
17th Circuit Court, Kent County