KEVIN A. ELSENHEIMER
CHARLES M. HAMLYN
CIRCUIT JUDGES

State of Michigan

Thirteenth Judicial Circuit
328 WASHINGTON STREET, SUITE 300
TRAVERSE CITY, MICHIGAN 49684
(231) 922-4701
c13court@13thcircuitcourt.org
www.13thcircuitcourt.org

COUNTIES
ANTRIM
GRAND TRAVERSE
LEELANAU

TRINA GIRARDIN
COURT ADMINISTRATOR

13th Circuit Court – Antrim/Grand Traverse/Leelanau Counties 2026-06J
Antrim County Probate Court 2026-01J
Grand Traverse County Probate Court 2026-01J
Leelanau County Probate Court 2026-01J
Rescinds Local Administrative Orders C13 2025-06J, P05 2025-01J, P28 2025-01J, P45 2025-01J

FAMILY DIVISION PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION

The 13th Circuit Court is made up of the counties of Grand Traverse, Antrim, and Leelanau. The chief judge of the Circuit Court has supervisory authority over the administration of the family division of the 13th Circuit Court. The two Circuit Court judges and three Probate Judges shall serve in the Family Division as specified in this plan. There is one appointed Presiding Judge of the Family Division in each County in the 13th Circuit Court: Grand Traverse County, Antrim County, and Leelanau County. The judges serving in the family division will meet as needed to address administrative and operational issues affecting the family division and to communicate on family law issues.

A. Authority. Pursuant to MCL 600.1011, as amended by 2002 PA 682, each judicial circuit is required to establish a family court plan (FCP or "the Plan"). Supreme Court Administrative Order 2003-2 requires the family court plan to be submitted for approval to the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO) for filing in accordance with the statute and guidelines provided by the SCAO. The chief circuit judge and the chief probate judges shall enter into an agreement establishing how the family division will be operated in the circuit and how the services will be coordinated. The chief judge of the circuit court has the authority to determine the duration of a judge's service pursuant to the family court plan in furtherance of this goal. This court has a multi-judge family division and the chief judge has selected a presiding judge to serve in that capacity.

B. Goals. The goals of this, in addition to the "one family-one judge" requirement, that are relevant to our courts include, but are not limited to: subject matter expertise, access to information from all relevant files, efficient court operation, and consistency and predictability for families.

C. Operation. This FCP supersedes prior plans that have been approved for the operation of the family division. This Plan will be reviewed and revised as necessary including when family division judicial assignments change, and at least every 2 years, by the chief circuit and chief probate judges to ensure that the Plan meets the statutory requirements and complies with the Family Court Plan Requirements and Guidelines provided by the SCAO. Appendix A shall be updated as necessary to correctly identify the current Family Division judges. The plan itself will remain in effect until a new LAO is executed.

II. ADMINISTRATION

A. JUDICIAL RESOURCES/SERVICE

1. Family Division Judges. All judges assigned to the family division have expressed an interest in overseeing family law cases through the end of their term. There are five judges assigned to the family division. See Appendix A. In addition to the judges, the court has available two attorney referees.

2. Judicial Expertise. Each judge listed above may attend New Judge Orientation as well as continued training consistent with MCJE rules, and is encouraged to attend training that informs the position and current skillset. Training opportunities are provided by the Michigan Judicial Institute (MJI), under MCL 600.1019 and utilizing judicial resources available through Westlaw and ICLE. A judge's service in the family division will require the continued development of judicial expertise in family law. All five judges have expertise in family law, both from the bench and from prior private practice. The judges shall continue to develop that expertise by regular participation in training offered through the Michigan Judicial Institute and other providers.

3. Judicial Service. All judges in "the Plan" will serve full time in the family division, under MCL 600.1011(3), where sufficient caseload and judicial resources exists. For any partial assignment the Plan must disclose the percentage of new filings by case type assigned to each judge.

4. It is not practicable for the judges serving in the family division to serve full-time. The circuit judges have judicial responsibilities in civil and criminal cases for the circuit in addition to family cases. The probate judges have judicial responsibilities for probate court cases in the county in which they serve.

5. Probate judges serving pursuant to this plan have the same power and authority as a circuit judge in family division matters within the county/circuit, in addition to the powers and authority of a judge of the probate court.

6. Referees will be utilized to the fullest extent permitted by statute and court rule. Attorney referees will be cross-trained to enable them to hear both domestic relations

and juvenile cases as permitted by statute and court rule. The court will regularly review the functions of referees to ensure that they are utilized to the fullest extent.

7. Staff Coordination. Staff currently serving in each unit of the family division, i.e. Friend of the Court, Juvenile Court, secretarial-clerical, court administrators, and court reporting will continue to function in the same manner as they currently do. Staff have extensive experience in their assigned functions. Further, with the small number of personnel involved, particularly in Antrim and Leelanau Counties, coordination is not difficult.

8. Supervisory Responsibility. The Chief Circuit Court Judge has supervisory authority of the administration of the family division. They shall directly supervise the circuit court administrator, court reporter(s), and the Friend of the Court in all three Counties. The Presiding Judges shall directly supervise the personnel of the Juvenile Division. Within the above divisions, the Friend of the Court, Juvenile Court Officers and Administrators will continue to supervise the personnel in their respective departments on a day-to-day basis.

9. Budget. The court will continue to prepare, submit, monitor, and report budgets as was established in the prior family division implementation plan. As necessary, the chief judge and presiding judges shall consult regarding budget issues.

10. Scheduling. Initial scheduling of domestic relations cases will be done centrally. In the event that a case requires rescheduling, the judge who is assigned to the case is responsible for rescheduling it. The Chief Judge, in conjunction with all judges serving in the family division, has developed a decentralized scheduling procedure.

B. ASSIGNMENT OF CASES

Cases involving members of the same family (aka "one family-one judge") is defined as "When 2 or more matters within the same jurisdiction of the family division of circuit court involving members of the same family are pending in the same judicial circuit, those matters, whenever practicable, shall be assigned to the judge to whom the first case was assigned." [MCL 600.1023] The term "whenever practicable" is not defined in statute but generally means to the greatest extent possible to further the goals of the family court plan described in section I(B).

1. Case Assignment. Cases are assigned randomly, as provided for under MCR 8.111 or as otherwise provided in accordance with 8.112(B), except for those cases identified to be those of a family member within the jurisdiction of the family court.

   The case assignments are outlined in the Family Plan Case Assignment LAO.

   In Antrim and Leelanau Counties, the Probate Judges will be assigned all family cases and extreme risk protection order cases in their counties.

In Grand Traverse County, the Probate Judge will be assigned all family cases which were formerly within the jurisdiction of the Probate Court, half of the cases of divorces involving children, Personal Protection Orders involving children, and extreme risk protection order cases.

In Grand Traverse County, the circuit judges will each be assigned one-half of the Grand Traverse County domestic relations cases not involving minor children and one-quarter of the Grand Traverse County domestic relations cases that do involve minor children.

In Grand Traverse County, when a domestic relations case is assigned to a circuit judge and a subsequent juvenile case involving the same family is filed, the case will be reassigned to the presiding family division judge.

2. Definitions.

   For purposes of this FCP, the term "family" means: a group of one or more parents and their children living together as a unit.

   For purposes of this FCP, the term "family member means: a family related by law or biology to one parent or same parents.

   For purposes of this FCP, the term "pending" means: Any matter that has been or is assigned to a prior judge including closed or inactive cases.

3. One Family-One Judge. The court will continue its implementation of the one family-one judge concept. Where there is a subsequent filing of a case involving the same family that was involved in a prior case, the judge handling the prior case shall be assigned that and all subsequent cases involving the same family.

4. Prior Matters. When cases or motions are filed, the clerk's office shall review the case inventory and court records to see if the family, as defined herein, has a prior pending matter, as defined herein.

5. Case Types. The primary case types of the family division are AB, AC, AD, AF, AG, AM, AN, AO, AU, AY, DC, DJ, DL, DM, DO, DP, DS, DZ, EE, EJ, EM, EP, ER, EV, EZ, FH (only felony, non-payment of child support), ID, JA, JG, NA, NB, PH, PJ, PP, PW, TL, UE, UF, UI, UM, UN, VF, and VP. The ancillary case types that may be included in the Plan, if concurrent jurisdiction plans or other court configurations require it are CA, CY, DD, GA, GL, GM, JA, LG, MI, NC, and PO.

6. Concurrent Cases. In Grand Traverse County, when a domestic relations case is assigned to a circuit judge and a subsequent juvenile case involving the same family is filed, the case will be reassigned to the presiding family division judge.

C. REASSIGNMENT OF CASES

1. Disqualifications. Disqualifications will first be handled as described under MCR 8.111(C)(1). Cases must be reassigned first with the court's family division, then within the remaining bench, and finally by SCAO assignment.

2. Transfer. When a judge's service in the family division ends, unresolved cases will be reassigned to another family division judge.

3. Dispute. Any dispute on proper reassignment shall be resolved by the chief judge and/or the presiding family division judge, should one be appointed.

D. STAFFING AND FACILITIES

1. A family division organizational chart is included as Appendix B.

Circuit Court Judge
Presides over civil cases exceeding $25,000, serious criminal cases, and family matters, serving a six-year term.

Family Division Judge
Presides over domestic relations matters, juvenile delinquency, and child protective proceedings serving a six-year term.

Family Division Referee
Serves as the Circuit Court Family Division domestic relations referee with responsibility for holding hearings and recommending decisions for review by the Family Division Judges. Serves as a referee for purposes of hearing Friend of the Court show causes, motions involving child-related disputes, delinquency matters, and abuse/neglect matters.

Family Court Administrator
Manages all administrative and quasi-judicial functions of the Family Court while working under the direction of the Family Court Judge. Duties include supervising staff, overseeing production of reports, ensuring timely case progression, and preparing budget for court operations.

Circuit Court Administrator
Serves as administrative officer for the Circuit Court under the direction of the Circuit Court Judges. Duties include supervising staff, overseeing production of reports, ensuring timely case progression, and preparing budget for court operations.

Friend of the Court
Serves as administrative officer for the Friend of the Court office, under the direction of the Circuit Court judges. Responsible for all administrative functions of the office of the Friend of the Court, supervising staff, budget preparation and management,

information technology systems, contract management, public relations and legal and regulatory compliance of the Friend of the Court.

Deputy Friend of the Court
Assists the Friend of the Court in managing, planning, and supervising the daily operations of the office of the Friend of the court.

Deputy Circuit Court Administrator
Assists the Circuit Court Administrator in managing, planning, and supervising the daily operations of the Circuit Court Administrator's Office.

Friend of the Court Case Manager
Primary function of this job is to conduct investigations, make recommendations to the court, and enforce court orders regarding child custody, parenting time, child support, and/or medical insurance coverage.

Chief Probation Officer
The primary function of the job is to supervise and coordinate the work of Juvenile Probation Officers. Manages probation caseload. Reviews and approves all probation officer reports. Responsible for supervising youth under court jurisdiction.

Juvenile Probation Officer
The primary function of this position is to monitor juveniles under court jurisdiction that have been placed on probation. This may include but is not limited to monitoring juveniles in their homes, schools, community, or in a placement facility. Case management may include preparing reports, conducting drug tests, attending weekly meetings, and attending court sessions.

Diversion Coordinator
The primary function of this position is to work with juveniles who have been referred to receive diversion services. This may include but is not limited to monitoring juveniles in their homes, schools, and community. Case management may include preparing reports, conducting drug tests, attending weekly meetings, assisting with community service projects, and coordinating programs.

Office Specialist
The primary function of this job is to provide varied and complex administrative office support and customer service assistance, requiring significant knowledge of and experience with departmental activities and programs. Duties may include scheduling hearings and preparing orders.

Programs Manager
Primary function of the job is to coordinate and manage the Circuit Court, Family Division Programs including the Therapeutic Court program and to coordinate services within the court and the community. This position also manages the CASA program for the Family Division.

Office Coordinator
Primary function of this job is to provide advanced, complex, and varied administrative and technical support for a department, which typically may include preparation and monitoring the department's budget.

Judicial Staff Attorney
Working under the direction of a Circuit Court Judge, this individual is responsible for conducting legal research, drafting opinions, and writing memoranda. A staff attorney acts as a liaison between Circuit Court Judge and those who interact with the Court.

Volunteer Transporter
Primary function of the job is to work with the Volunteer Services office, 13th Circuit Court, Family Division for transporting youth on probation, to and from detention or treatment facilities throughout the State of Michigan.

Judicial Assistant
Under the supervision of the Family Division Judge, assists the Judge and court administrator in making sure the Court operates efficiently and effectively; processes routine legal paperwork and correspondence; reviews, studies and research laws, court decisions, documents, opinions, briefs and orders in Circuit Court, Family Division and Probate matters.

Juvenile Register
This position is responsible for maintaining records, scheduling hearings, and ensuring compliance with legal procedures related to juvenile cases.

Court Reporter
Court reporters perform duties related to the production of verbatim record of court proceedings, producing certified transcripts as required, and maintaining the archive of court proceedings.

Circuit Court Specialist
Primary functions of the job are to provide customer assistance and complex and varied legal and financial functions related to Circuit Court programs. Employees in this job have no formal supervisory role, however, may train, guide, or lead employees in the designated work unit.

Youth Services Counselor
Under the direction of the Probate and Family Court Judge and Family Court Administrator, plans and provides juvenile services. Duties include investigating juvenile complaints, developing prevention plans and supervising cases involving youth experiencing difficulties. Provides group and individual counseling to juveniles and families. Educates the general public on youth related issues. Collaborates with other agencies for specialized counseling and/or educational programs

Diversion Counselor

The primary function of this position is to work with juveniles who have been referred to receive diversion services. This may include but is not limited to monitoring juveniles in their homes, schools, and community. Case management may include preparing reports, conducting drug tests, attending weekly meetings, assisting with community service projects, and coordinating programs.

These employees advance the goals of the Family Division Plan and are available to ensure judicial efficiency, meet time guidelines, and promote access to the judicial system. Staff are cross-trained to ensure staff coverage needed at any time and to meet the goals of the public and the judiciary in the most efficient manner by streamlining tasks to specific judges and staff.

2. Remote Proceedings. At the request of any participant, or sua sponte, the family division will allow the use of videoconferencing technology by any participant. The use of videoconferencing may not be used in bench or jury trial, or any other proceeding wherein the testimony of witnesses or presentation of evidence may occur, except in the discretion of the court after all parties have had notice and opportunity to be heard on the use of videoconferencing technology. A party may participate by telephonic means under MCR 2.402.

3. Facilities. Facilities that further the goals of the Family Division Plan include utilize nursing/mother's rooms, conference rooms for confidential attorney/client meetings, children's play area, beanie baby room for adoption hearings, Zoom rooms including television screens, juvenile holding rooms, and public computers. Periodic reviews include a security committee that meets quarterly as well as an internal court administrator meeting to discuss improvements of facilities that takes place in Grand Traverse County.

E. RECORDS MANAGEMENT

1. Clerks of the Court. The Antrim, Leelanau, and Grand Traverse County Clerks are designated as the Clerk of the Court for the Family Division. The Antrim, Leelanau, and Grand Traverse probate clerks shall maintain every record created by or filed with the probate court.

2. Plan Development. The County Clerk has been afforded the opportunity to participate in the development of plans for management of court records. Any letter of concurrence or disagreement with the Plan authored by the County Clerk regarding management of court records shall be submitted to the SCAO with the submission of the Family Court Plan for approval.

3. Filing. All filings will occur in the same manner as established in the prior family division implementation plan; filings shall be filed in the corresponding Circuit Court Records office of the County Clerk. After initial implementation of the family

division, it was agreed by the Clerk and the Courts that there was insufficient space or personnel to accommodate a transfer of files or filing.

4. Access Point. The County Clerk's office is the central access point in each county to provide the public and bar information regarding the family division and related activities. Court staff of the functional units of the family division (for example, Friend of the Court and juvenile staff) and staff of the Probate Judges shall assist the Clerk's office, as necessary, in providing such information.

   - **13th Circuit Court Administrator's Office:**
     https://www.gtcountymi.gov/2745/13th-Circuit-Court

   - **Antrim County Clerk's Office:**
     https://www.antrimcountymi.gov/departments___services_/clerk/index.php

   - **Antrim County Family Division:**
     https://www.antrimcountymi.gov/departments___services_/courts/probate_court_and_family_division/index.php

   - **Grand Traverse County Clerk's Office:**
     https://www.gtcountymi.gov/223/County-Clerk

   - **Grand Traverse County Family Division:**
     https://www.gtcountymi.gov/252/Family-Division

   - **Leelanau County Clerk's Office:**
     https://www.leelanau.gov/departments/clerk/index.php

   - **Leelanau County Family Division:**
     https://www.leelanau.gov/departments/courts/circuit_court__family_division/index.php

5. Internal Transfer. The internal transfer of files is done electronically via means of email and our internal document management system. These means are protected by County I.T. departments.

6. Technological Access. This access ensures our email and internal document management system instantaneously provides files to all judicial officers.

7. This Family Division Plan is posted on the court's website and is otherwise publicly available upon request.

07/22/2026
12:57PM

JENNIFER L. WHITTEN, FAMILY DIVISION JUDGE, P75487

Hon. Jennifer L. Whitten
Chief Probate Judge for
Grand Traverse County

07/22/2026
04:08PM

KEVIN A. ELSENHEIMER, CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE, P49293

Hon. Kevin A. Elsenheimer
Chief 13th Circuit Court Judge
Chief Probate Judge for Antrim &
Leelanau Counties

07/22/2026
01:48PM

CHARLES M. HAMLYN, CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE, P74133

Hon. Charles M. Hamlyn
13th Circuit Court Judge

07/22/2026
12:33PM

STACEY L. TRUESDELL, FAMILY DIVISION JUDGE, P69311

Hon. Stacey L. Truesdell
Probate Judge for Antrim County

07/22/2026
12:21PM

STEVEN W. PACIORKA, FAMILY DIVISION JUDGE, P72125

Hon. Steven W. Paciorka
Probate Judge for Leelanau County

Appendix A

JUDGES SERVING IN THE FAMILY DIVISION OF THE 13TH CIRCUIT COURT

The Antrim County Family Division judge is Hon. Stacey L. Truesdell

Family Division Service Started: January 1, 2025
Current Term Expires: December 31, 2030

The Grand Traverse County Family Division judge is Hon. Jennifer L. Whitten

Family Division Service Started: March 4, 2022
Current Term Expires: December 31, 2030

The Leelanau County Family Division judge is Hon. Steven W. Paciorka

Family Division Service Started: January 1, 2025
Current Term Expires: December 31, 2030

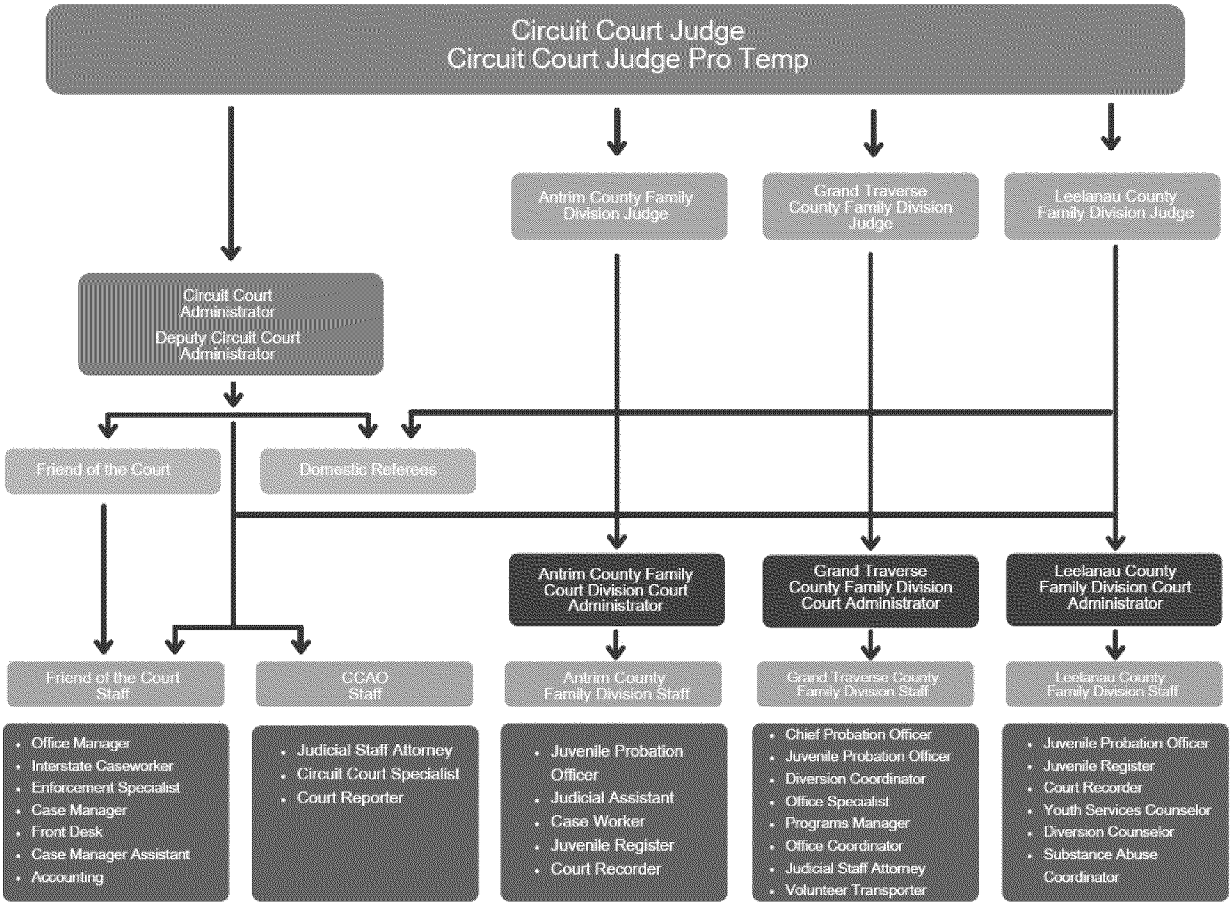
Hon. Kevin A. Elsenheimer serves as the Chief 13th Circuit Court judge

Family Division Service Started: January 17, 2017
Current Term Expires: December 31, 2026

Hon. Charles M. Hamlyn serves as a 13th Circuit Court judge.

Family Division Service Started: January 1, 2023
Current Term Expires: December 31, 2028

Appendix B


Circuit Court Judge
Circuit Court Judge Pro Temp
Antrim County Family Division Judge
Grand Traverse County Family Division Judge
Leelanau County Family Division Judge
Circuit Court Administrator
Deputy Circuit Court Administrator
Friend of the Court
Domestic Referees
Antrim County Family Court Division Court Administrator
Grand Traverse County Family Division Court Administrator
Leelanau County Family Division Court Administrator
Friend of the Court Staff
CCAO Staff
Antrim County Family Division Staff
Grand Traverse County Family Division Staff
Leelanau County Family Division Staff
Office Manager
Interstate Caseworker
Enforcement Specialist
Case Manager
Front Desk
Case Manager Assistant
Accounting
Judicial Staff Attorney
Circuit Court Specialist
Court Reporter
Juvenile Probation Officer
Judicial Assistant
Case Worker
Juvenile Register
Court Recorder
Chief Probation Officer
Juvenile Probation Officer
Diversion Coordinator
Office Specialist
Programs Manager
Office Coordinator
Judicial Staff Attorney
Volunteer Transporter
Juvenile Probation Officer
Juvenile Register
Court Recorder
Youth Services Counselor
Diversion Counselor
Substance Abuse Coordinator