46th CIRCUIT COURT

Joint Local Administrative Order C46 2026-06J

CRAWFORD COUNTY PROBATE COURT

Local Administrative Order P20 2026-02J

KALKASKA COUNTY PROBATE COURT

Local Administrative Order P40 2026-01J

OTSEGO COUNTY PROBATE COURT

Local Administrative Order P69 2026-02J

Rescinds Circuit Court Joint Local Administrative Order C46 2025-05J
Rescinds Crawford County Probate Court Local Administrative Order P20 2025-03J
Rescinds Kalkaska County Probate Court Local Administrative Order P40-2025-02J
Rescinds Otsego County Probate Court Local Administrative Order P69 2025-02J

FAMILY DIVISION PLAN

I. INTRODUCTION

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 judge 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 with each County within the Circuit having a family division judge, and the Chief Judge of the Circuit has selected each family division judge to be the Presiding Judge of the Family Division of his or her respective county.

B. Goals. The goals of this FCP are to identify procedures for the assignment of cases, management of records, and allocation of resources to facilitate the "one family-one judge" requirement to serve the interests of individuals, families and children with efficiency, consistency and predictability.

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. In the event of a change in judicial assignment, the chief judge of the circuit and the presiding family division judges shall review the Plan to determine if revisions are necessary.

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.

   Crawford County Family Division Judge:
   Honorable Monte J. Burmeister, P48732
   Term: 01/01/2025 – 12/31/2031

   Kalkaska County Family Division Judge:
   Honorable Lynne Buday, P35771
   Term: 01/01/2025 – 12/31/2031

   Otsego County Family Division Judge:
   Honorable Kevin Hesselink, P39922
   Term: 01/01/2025-12/31/2031

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.

3. Judicial Services. 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.

B. ASSIGNMENT OF CASES

Assignment of cases requires the recognition of MCR 8.111 ***or*** as otherwise provided in accordance with 8.112(B). 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 1(B).

1. In all counties, all family division matters will be assigned to the probate judges, with the exception of divorces without children (DO) and other domestic relations matters (DZ), which will be assigned by lot between the circuit judges.

2. One Family-One Judge. When a new family division case is opened the clerk will review the case inventory. If a person listed in the new family division case is listed in a current family division case, the same Judge will be assigned, if practicable. Because the court is a "one family-one judge" court, the only time this would not be practicable is if the second case did not involve a minor. For example, the first case is an NA case and the second case is a DO where the parent in the NA case is divorcing a spouse (no children involved) not listed in the NA case.

3. 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.

4. 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, DP, DS, 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. Ancillary case types include CA, CY, DD, GA, GL, GM, JA, LG, MI, NC and PO. Case types not included in the family court plan are DO and DZ.

5. Concurrent Cases. All family division matters assigned to the probate judge in each county support the one family-one judge requirement as the same judge will hear a DL case where the juvenile is also the child in an NA case.

C. REASSIGNMENT OF CASES

1. Disqualifications. Disqualification 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. In the event a judge's service in the family division ends, unresolved cases will be reassigned to another family division judge within the circuit or the court will seek judicial assignment through the State Court Administrative Office.

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. Administrative Structure. A family division organizational chart is included in Appendix A. Judges, Referees and all staff from the family division of the court will fulfill the duties assigned to each specific position. The court will also cross-train staff serving the family division as is practicable to ensure the continued processing of all cases. ADR services are contractual and utilized when appropriate. The goals of the Family Court Plan will therefore be met in an efficient and appropriate manner.

2. Remote Proceedings. The 46th Circuit Court Family Division complies with MCR 2.408 pertaining to remote proceedings. Certain hearing types such as examinations, evidentiary hearings, trials, and termination of parental rights hearings must be in-person. Parties may participate via Video Conferencing permitting they have ample signal strength to make a good record. At any time if a party is requesting to appear in person they may do so unless otherwise articulated on the record for good cause as to why the proceeding cannot accommodate an in-person appearance.

3. Facilities.
   The 46th Circuit Court – Crawford County Family Division provides ample private meeting rooms throughout the building for attorney/client meetings, and all patrons entering the building must go through the security station at the front entrance to the courthouse. Bailiffs are in the courtroom for court proceedings. The Circuit Court Clerk's Office is located in the same building on the main floor and Friend of the Court Offices are located in the same building on the lower level of the building. The public may access court forms in person and online. There is a locked drop box outside of the public entrance for after-hours payments and filings. The courthouse parking lot offers a designated parenting time child exchange that is monitored by video surveillance and available for use 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

   The 46th Circuit Court-Kalkaska County Family Division provides two courtrooms for family division hearings. Bailiffs operate a security station at the public entrance to the courthouse when court is in session. Bailiffs are in the courtroom for in-person hearings. The Circuit Court Clerk's office and the Friend of the Court are located in a separate building at the same address as the courthouse. The public may access court forms in person and online. There is a locked drop box outside of the public entrance for after-hours payments and filings.

   The 46th Circuit Court - Otsego County Family Division provides two courtrooms for family division hearings. Bailiffs are in each courtroom for in-person hearings. Each courtroom has two meetings rooms that provide private space for attorneys to meet with their clients.

   The Otsego County Family Division is protected by a locked public entrance door, accessible only by staff allowing passage into the building. A quarterly

Security Committee meeting takes place in the building to discuss all security issues occurring during the previous quarter and the subsequent planning of improvements to avoid future similar security issues.

The public may access court forms online through the SCAO and the Otsego County Judicial System has a locked drop box located outside the front public entrance for after-hours filing.

E. RECORDS MANAGEMENT

1. Clerks of the Court.
   The 46th Circuit Court – Crawford County Family Division is designated as the Clerk/Juvenile Register of the Family Division, with all juvenile files being filed with the Juvenile Register in the Family Division. The Crawford County Probate Clerk shall maintain every record created by or filed with the probate court.

   The 46th Circuit Court – Kalkaska County Family Division is designated as the Clerk/Juvenile Register of the Family Division, with all juvenile files being filed with the Juvenile Register in the Family Division. The Kalkaska County Probate Clerk shall maintain every record created by or filed with the probate court.

   The 46th Circuit Court – Otsego County Family Division is designated as the Clerk/Juvenile Register of the Family Division, with all juvenile files being filed with the Juvenile Register in the Family Division. The Otsego County Probate Clerk shall maintain every record created by or filed with the probate court.

2. Plan Development. The County Clerk participates in the development of plans for the management of court records. Any letter of occurrence 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. Methods for filing family division documents include the U.S. Postal Service, delivering filings in person to the courthouse, and e-mail. Records are stored in each of the three county courthouses and can be accessed, if public records, at the same. Case scheduling information can be found by calling the Family Division. All original records will be filed with the family division clerk in accordance with MCR 8.119(D).

4. Access Point. All information for the 46th Circuit Court, counties Otsego, Crawford, and Kalkaska regarding the family division and related activities can be found at www.circuit46.org.

5. Internal Transfer. Files may be transferred between family division departments through the following methods: 1) Physical transfer by approved staff members with proper credentials to enter secured departments and 2) Electronic transfer between approved staff members via a secure network system and email.

6. Technological Access.
The 46th Circuit Court – Crawford County Family Division ensures timely technological access to all family division cases for all family division judges and referees. The case management system for our family division is the JIS-Judicial Information System.

7. **The 46th Circuit Court – Kalkaska County Family Division** ensures timely technological access to all family division cases for all family division judges and referees. The case management system for our family division is the JIS-Judicial Information System.

   The 46th Circuit Court – Otsego County Family Division ensures timely technological access to all family division cases for all family division judges and referees. All family division cases are stored in one of two case management systems, either JIS or JMS.

8. Public Access. This Family Court Plan is posted on the court's website and is otherwise publicly available upon request. Requests can be made via U.S. Postal Services, e-mail, or telephone for all three counties (Otsego, Crawford, and Kalkaska).

Date: 7-29-26

Honorable Colin G. Hunter
46th Circuit Court, Chief Judge

Date: 7/22/26

Honorable Monte J. Burmeister
Crawford County Probate and District Court Chief Judge

Date: 8-10-2026

Honorable Lynne M. Buday
Kalkaska County Probate and District Court Chief Judge

Date: 8-3-26

Honorable Kevin L. Hesselink
Otsego County Probate and District Court Chief Judge

APPENDIX A

JUDGES SERVING IN THE FAMILY DIVISION OF THE 46TH CIRCUIT COURT

Hon. Colin G. Hunter, Chief Judge, 46th Circuit Court

Hon. Judge George J. Mertz, Chief Judge Pro Tem, 46th Circuit Court, and Otsego County Probate Court Chief Judge

PRESIDING FAMILY DIVISON JUDGES

Hon. Lynne M. Buday, Chief Judge, Kalkaska County Probate Court

Hon. Monte J. Burmeister, Chief Judge, Crawford County Probate Court

Hon. Kevin L. Hesselink, , Chief Judge, Otsego County Probate Court

APPENDIX B

46TH CIRCUIT COURT – FAMILY DIVISION

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

