

STATE OF MICHIGAN SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT OAKLAND PROBATE COURT	FAMILY COURT PLAN OF THE SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT & PROBATE COURTS	JOINT LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2025 <u>J</u>
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This amended Family Court Plan rescinds Joint Local Administrative Order 2020-02J for the Sixth Judicial Circuit and Probate Courts. Upon approval by the State Court Administrator, this plan shall be effective and control operations within the Family division of the Sixth Judicial Circuit Court. This plan comports with MCL 600.1011 and AO 2003-2¹.

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). 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 court and how the services will be coordinated. The chief judge of the circuit court has the authority to assign circuit court judges to the family division and 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. Policy decisions on all family division matters shall be made by the presiding judge of the family division subject to approval by the chief circuit judge.

B. GOAL

The goal of this FCP is to fulfill the "one family-one judge" requirement for domestic and juvenile cases as much as practicable. The FCP is expected to provide consistent judicial resources, subject matter expertise, access to information from all relevant files, efficient court operation to ensure consistent and predictable outcomes for families within Oakland County.

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 FCP meets the statutory requirements and complies with the Family Court Plan Requirements and Guidelines provided by the SCAO.

¹ Updated by SCAO March 2025

II. ADMINISTRATION

A. JUDICIAL RESOURCES / SERVICE

The family division shall be comprised of a sufficient number of circuit judges, as determined by the chief circuit judge, to meet the workload of the division.

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. Appendix A provides a list of the judges assigned to the family division, the start and expiration of their term of service.

2. TERM OF SERVICE

The term of service for family division judges is six (6) years unless a vacancy in the civil/criminal division occurs prior to the expiration of the six-year term. Or if a judge in the civil/criminal division expresses the desire to serve on the family division bench and there is a family division judge willing to serve on the civil/criminal division bench.²

3. FILING OF VACANCIES

The chief circuit judge has the authority and flexibility to modify the duration of the circuit court judges' service pursuant to this plan, in furtherance of the goal that judges of the family division will have sufficient judicial expertise in family division matters.

The following methodologies shall be used to fill vacancies unless the chief circuit judge determines that it is not in the best interest of the division or other good cause exists not the use this method of filling vacancies.

a. Vacancies in the family division

- i. When a vacancy in the family division occurs (by term limit, retirement, or otherwise), the chief circuit judge will notify the circuit court judges at the next regularly scheduled full bench meeting of the opportunity to switch dockets.
- ii. Circuit judges may volunteer to serve in the family division. Volunteers will be selected by seniority from the pool of available judges.

² The six-year term may be waived by the chief circuit judge to fulfill the goals of the FCP

- iii. If no judges volunteer, the chief circuit judge may elect to conduct a final poll (with a date certain deadline) of the circuit judges to determine interest.
- iv. If after polling the circuit judges there are still no volunteers, the vacancy shall be filled by the most recently elected or appointed judge.
- v. When there are two or more elected or appointed judges, the most senior of the judges who desire to serve in the Family division will be assigned to a family docket.
- vi. If none of the newly elected or appointed judges desire to serve in the family division, the vacancy shall be filled by the judge who has the most legal experience³ in any family or probate division matter.
- vii. If none of the newly elected or appointed judges have legal experience in any family or probate matters, then the vacancy shall be filled by the least senior of the judges and continue by reverse seniority order.
- viii. If judicial election or appointment is not applicable but a docket adjustment is in the best interest of circuit court operations, the chief circuit judge will select circuit judges to serve in the family division, in reverse seniority order. Judges who have previously served are exempt from the provision.

b. Vacancies in the civil/criminal division

- i. When a vacancy in the civil/criminal division occurs (by term limit, retirement, or otherwise), the chief circuit judge will notify the circuit court judges at the next regularly scheduled full bench meeting of the opportunity to switch dockets.
- ii. Any family division judge with interest in serving in the civil/criminal division shall notify the chief circuit judge as soon as practicable but before the next regularly scheduled bench meeting following the notice of civil/criminal division vacancy.

³ Most legal experience is determined by an approximate number of family, juvenile, or probate cases/matters ever handled in their legal career.

iii. If the number of judges in the family division desiring to switch dockets exceeds the number of available civil/criminal division vacancies, the assignment of family division judges to the civil/criminal division will be determined by judicial seniority⁴. In no event shall a judge who elects not to stay in the family division displace a civil/criminal division judge with more seniority who does not want to serve in the family division.

4. JUDICIAL EXPERTISE

- a. Upon entering the family division, a judge and his or her staff members shall be offered an orientation that will review existing policy and procedures. Court staff and stakeholders may be utilized to provide this orientation.
- b. Each judge listed in Appendix A may attend New Judge Orientation as well as continued training consistent with MCJE rules. Judges are 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. Family division Judges are encouraged to attend the Family Law Institute training each November in addition to attending webinars/seminars provided by MJI, NACM, or the SBM including but not limited to areas focused on family law matters, juvenile justice, juvenile delinquency, child protection proceedings, emergency order matters (PPO and ERPO), and minor guardianships/conservatorships. Consistent with financial limitations, the court will encourage staff to pursue these educational opportunities.

5. JUDICIAL SERVICE

All judges in the FCP will serve full time in the family division, under MCL 600.1011(3), where sufficient caseload and judicial resources exist.

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

⁴ Seniority is defined as the current number of consecutive years of service on the Sixth Circuit Court bench.

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. DEFINITIONS

- a. For purposes of this FCP, the term “family” means: Spouse or persons having one or more minor children in common and the minor children of both (whether by law or biology), whether living in the same household, or other individuals not otherwise defined and living in the same household who are subject to a Personal Protection Order or Extreme Risk Protection Order.
- b. For purposes of this FCP, the term “family member” means: Legal or biological parent(s), children, and siblings.
- c. For purposes of this FCP, the term “pending” means: Where testimony has been taken by the jurist, but no ruling has been made as the result of that testimony. Furthermore, “completion” extends to ruling upon a subsequent motion for clarification or reconsideration of the jurists’ order.
- d. For purposes of this FCP, the term “open case” means: A case on which the court *may* exercise its jurisdiction over the parties, including reviews of guardianships or juvenile proceedings, or post-judgment domestic relations matters where minor children have not emancipated or the case is otherwise closed.

2. 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. Family division cases which are an exception to the blind draw requirement are outlined in the Sixth Judicial Circuit Court’s Local Administrative Order *Method for Assigning cases in the Family division of the Circuit Court*.

3. DOCKET ADJUSTMENTS COMPLETION OF PENDING CASES

When docket adjustments are made pursuant to FCP section II, A, 1, 3, completion of pending cases upon entry or exit from the family division and reassignment of open cases shall be governed as follows:

- a. Judges leaving the family division shall complete all pending motions, trials, and dispositions, unless otherwise agreed by both judges that the receiving judge will hear the unresolved matters.
- b. Subject to chief circuit judge approval, a judge may select to keep a case or cases that are included in those to be reassigned. Any disputes about the responsibility for cases will be resolved by the chief circuit judge. All other open cases on the departing judge's docket (where the court continues to exercise supervision) will be assigned to the incoming judge or other judges in the family division. The chief circuit judge may adjust docket in accordance with MCR 8.110.
- c. Judges selected to serve in the family division, who have pending non-family division cases, will complete any in-progress trials and hearings, and/or decide any matters under advisement. Upon completion, the judge will notify the chief circuit judge to request reassignment of the case. The chief circuit judge may adjust dockets in accordance with MCR 8.110.
- d. A judge entering the family division shall assume the docket of the judge he/she replaces; similarly, a family division judge moving to another division of the circuit court shall assume the docket of the judge he/she replaces, except as it relates to specialized dockets (i.e. business court docket). The chief circuit judge may adjust dockets in accordance with MCR 8.110.

4. ONE FAMILY-ONE JUDGE

- a. Each family division judge will hear and decide all aspects of the cases within the subject matter jurisdiction of the court. Family division cases will be divided among the judges.
- b. To the extent practicable, all matters within the jurisdiction of the family division involving a family will be assigned to the same judge. Whenever a new case is filed the clerk responsible will determine whether a prior action is pending or open which involves a member of the same family.
- c. The family division will make full use of referees as allowed by statute and court rule. Referees will be assigned to cases pursuant to MCR 3.215 and MCR 3.913. Referees may be assigned to any matter within the family division jurisdiction, unless the referee hearing is prohibited by law.

- d. All juvenile traffic cases shall be assigned by the Court's Juvenile Intake Office to Family division judges; however, the cases shall be handled by Juvenile Referees.
- e. All adoption cases shall be assigned by the adoption department to Family division judges; however, the cases may be handled by the Juvenile Referees.
- f. The Family division cases initiated in the County Clerk's office will be assigned to a Family division Judge on a random basis, pursuant to MCR 8.111, except as set forth herein.
- g. The procedure for assignment of cases, blind draw procedure, and reassignment of cases within the family division are governed by the court's Local Administrative Order regarding *Methods for Assigning Cases in the Family division of the Circuit Court*.

5. PRIOR MATTERS

When cases or motions are filed, the clerk's office shall review the case inventory and court records for prior pending matters, as outlined in the court's Local Administrative Order regarding *Method for Assigning cases in the Family Division of the Circuit Court*.

6. CASE TYPES

- a. 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, ID, JA, JG, NA, NB, NC, PH, PJ, PP, PW, TL, UE, UF, UI, UM, UN, VF, and VP. *

* FH Felony non-support cases are not included in the case assignment process as these cases are heard by judges assigned to the general civil/criminal jurisdiction dockets.

- b. Ancillary case types are not being used in initial case assignments; however, a Family division Judge may hear GM, LG, CY or DD of a minor. All minor guardianship petitions to open or reopen a file (filed on or after January 3, 2017) will be assigned to a Probate Court Judge in accordance with the Probate Court method of case assignment.
- c. If a minor guardianship is filed and it comes to the attention of the probate court judge that there exists a family division case to which the minor guardianship is ancillary, then the probate court judge may contact the family division judge and together determine if the minor guardianship should be reassigned to the family division judge. Similarly, if the family division judge learns that a minor guardianship

assigned to a probate court judge may be ancillary to a family division case, then the family division judge may contact the probate court judge and together determine if the minor guardianship should be reassigned to the family division judge. Court administrators may assist in reassessments between circuit and probate court judges.

- d. Any dispute as to the reassignment of any case shall be resolved by the chief circuit judge and chief probate judge.
- e. Ancillary case types that ARE NOT included in the Plan are CA, GA, GL, JA, and PO.

7. CONCURRENT CASES

The court's Local Administrative Order regarding *Methods for Assigning cases in the Family division of the Circuit Court* govern exceptions to the blind draw process designed to support the "one family-one judge" requirement. Furthermore, cases may be reassigned if it is discovered a case or cases should have been assigned to a prior judge but were not assigned at case initiation.

C. REASSIGNMENT OF CASES

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. Other case reassessments are governed by the court's Local Administrative Order regarding *Methods for Assigning cases in the Family division of the Circuit Court*

D. URGENT MATTERS

1. TIME SENSITIVE ORDERS

With the technology, family division judges can hold hearings, review pleadings and sign orders remotely making the former on premise "duty judge" process obsolete. Family division judges can administer their own time sensitive cases such as PPOs and ERPOs in a timely manner off site. It is the responsibility of the assigned judge to plan with another judge to handle urgent matters when access to remote technology is impractical. The absent judge's staff shall review and present the order to the covering judge's staff in a manner consistent with the absent judge's protocols.

2. AFTER COURT HOURS URGENT ORDERS

- a. Family division judges will handle after court hour requests for extreme risk protection orders (ERPOs) on a rotating ERPO duty judge schedule.
- b. The presiding judge of family will handle infectious disease cases which are filed after court hours.

E. STAFFING AND FACILITIES

1. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

The Family division Judges are identified in Appendix A.

2. JUDICIAL SUPPORT STRUCTURE

- a. Friend of the Court support staff are identified in Appendix B. Staff include domestic referee teams for custody & parenting time, medical, and interstate matters, for support enforcement, and for paternity matters assigned to a specific judge. FOC teams are comprised of a domestic referee and support staff including case, custody, parenting time, accountant, child support, and interstate specialists.
- b. Juvenile support staff are identified in Appendix B. Staff include juvenile referees assigned to family judges by blind draw and juvenile support clerks assigned to a specific family division judge.

3. REMOTE PROCEEDINGS

The FCP complies with MCR 2.408. Family division Judges vary in the extent to which videoconferencing is used for particular purposes as determined by an analysis of MCR 2.407. Domestic and Juvenile Referee hearings are typically conducted via videoconferencing unless an analysis of MCR 2.407 indicates otherwise.

4. FACILITIES

a. Courthouse

The courthouse is open to the public Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and is staffed with deputies from the Oakland County Sheriff's Office. The public is screened for weapons upon entry. A courthouse security committee is convened

for overall security of the court as required by Michigan Supreme Court Rule. The court has several private single and double zoom pods located around the courthouse. The zoom pods provide confidential spaces to meet with clients and/or conduct hearings via zoom while being accessible for in-person hearings.

The juvenile, adoption, and PPO divisions are located on the ground, first, and second floors of the east wing of the courthouse. The ground floor has children's books and toys and ample room for attorneys to meet with clients. These divisions also have the same zoom pod and security measures and are open to the public Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. However, juvenile referees are on duty for Saturday morning preliminary hearings which are typically handled remotely since the pandemic. **

** The Oakland County Executive Office operates the County's Juvenile Detention Facility known as Children's Village. The court has no control over operations within Children's Village

b. Friend of the Court (FOC)

FOC is open to the public Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and is staffed with deputies from the Oakland County Sheriff's Office. The public is screened for weapons upon entry. FOC has private single and double zoom pods located in its building. The zoom pods provide confidential spaces to meet with clients and/or conduct hearings via zoom while being accessible for in-person hearings. Parents also use zoom pods to set their children up with games and other toys leaving them with another adult while the parent is testifying in the referee hearing room. There is a larger office space which was converted to a play area where custody and parenting time specialists and court clinic psychologists can interview children.

F. RECORDS MANAGEMENT

1. CLERK OF THE COURT

The Oakland County Clerk is designated as the clerk of the court for the family division. The Oakland County Probate Clerk 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

The County Clerk is the Clerk of the court for the circuit court. Case filing for the family division may be accomplished through the Michigan Supreme Court's e-filing process. Except as delineated below, matters within the subject matter jurisdiction of the family division and identified by case type codes listed in the Michigan Supreme Court Case File Management Standards (a)(6)-(10) will be filed with the County Clerk.

- a. Petitions to commence proceedings under the juvenile code in child protective, delinquency, status offender and designated proceedings will be maintained by the juvenile intake office until a judge or referee has authorized the filing of a petition. Until filing of the petition is authorized, these matters will be considered confidential files.⁵
- b. Minor guardianship petitions will be filed with the Probate Court, as jurisdiction for these matters is only ancillary in the family division. Additionally, other ancillary matters described in MCL 600.1021(2) will be filed in the probate court.
- c. Adoption petitions will be filed in the adoption unit of the family division, although records and receipts of adoption petition filings will be maintained by the county clerk (MCL 710.21, *et. seq*) Case files will be maintained by the family division until a final order is entered. At that time, all legal records within the case file will be under the custodianship of the county clerk. Confidential records will be maintained by the family division.
- d. Waiver of parental consent for abortion cases will be filed with court administration.
- e. Youth Assistance records are non-court diversion files.
- f. Juvenile traffic citations will be maintained by juvenile intake.

⁵ This statement clarifies that those complaints and petitions which the court declines to authorize will remain confidential. Only those petitions which the court authorizes for filing with the county clerk will be public record. For appeals of decisions not to authorize or to unauthorize petitions, parties shall contact the juvenile intake office for records and registers of action.

4. ACCESS POINTS

- a. Access to Family division Records is governed by the Court's Local Administrative Order regarding Access, Inspection, Reproduction, and Creation of Court Records (LAO 2021-03) Access to Juvenile Records are limited pursuant to statute by contacting juvenilelegal@oakgov.com
- b. Public domestic court records may be viewed, accessed, or purchased online through Court Explorer <https://courtexplorer.oakgov.com/OaklandCounty> or in the Oakland County Clerks Office's eService Center.
- c. Adoption and juvenile court records are confidential and may not be viewed without a court order.

5. INTERNAL TRANSFER

- a. The court's register of actions and electronic records are contained on internal systems with security controls engaged as indicated by the court staff members' individual security clearances.
- b. The court uses the county intranet for sharing documents and communication between hundreds of court and clerk staff.

6. TECHNOLOGICAL ACCESS

- a. The court's data technology unit assists in the evaluation, development, and implementation of technological solutions to increase communication between the various service units.
- b. Family division judges, domestic and juvenile referees, and court administration staff have broad security clearances to ensure timely technological access to all family division cases.
- c. Specialized software (i.e. Youth Center, Laserfiche) and case management systems (i.e. Mainframe, TCS) allow for increased sharing of reports and information between judicial staff, court staff, county clerk staff, children's village staff, and county deputies.

7. PUBLIC ACCESS

This FCP is posted on the court's website and is otherwise publicly available upon request.

III. COLLABORATION

Since its inception, the family division has emphasized and expanded collaborative efforts with its stakeholders across all services. Emphasis has remained on increasing communication and coordination of services with the goal of providing comprehensive, timely, and appropriate assistance to families the court was established to serve.

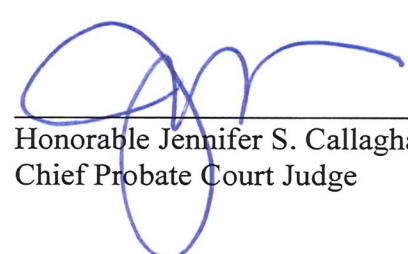
Collaboration has occurred between the Court and the County Executive Office departments of Human Resources, Management and Budget, Information Technology, Facilities, Community Corrections, Adult Probation and Health Division; the Oakland County Board of Commissioners, the Oakland County Clerk's Office, the Oakland County Prosecutor's Office, Oakland County Sheriff's Office, Oakland County Bar Association and Foundation, the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, DHHS, HAVEN, and other community based organizations.

- A. The Family Assignment Committee oversees the appointment of juvenile defense attorneys. The committee requires individuals who enter service contracts or attorneys who accept appointments from the family division to have training in court procedures and practices and to complete court-sponsored training as a condition precedent to court-appointed or contractual work.
- B. Family court administrative staff and judges participate in the QUAD agency committee, including representatives from the court, DHHS, the Oakland County Prosecutor's Office, and Friend of the Court. This committee meets regularly to address common issues, creatively improve services, and resolve difficulties with procedures or process.
- C. The court also established a Juvenile Justice Reform County Implementation Team including representatives from the circuit court family division, Oakland County Board of Commissioners, Oakland County Executive, Oakland County Prosecutor, Oakland County Health Network, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Oakland County Chiefs of Police Association, Juvenile Defense Attorney Representative, Oakland County K-12 School Districts, Community Based Services Agencies Representative, and Oakland University. The team meets monthly to address juvenile justice reforms and initiatives to better serve youth and families of Oakland County.



Honorable Jeffery S. Matis
Chief Circuit Court Judge

6-5-25
Date



Honorable Jennifer S. Callaghan
Chief Probate Court Judge

6-5-25
Date

LAO 2025 – XX: The FCP was revised to comport with SCAO's model FCP.

LAO 2020- XXX: Amendments were adopted to update Attachment I, to clarify the meaning of "completion" of pending matters, to remove redundant and old processes, and to incorporate by reference the LAO 2019-15 (or a successive LAO) Method for Assigning Cases in the Family Division of Circuit Court.

LAO 2018-07J: Amendments were adopted to 1) change the term of service in the Family Division from six years to four, 2) change the notification date for electing to come out of the Family Division from July 1 to September 1, 3) give authority to the Chief Judge to waive the September 1 notification date if an unexpected vacancy occurs after September 1, and 4) provide that a judge who elects not to stay in the Family Division may not displace a Civil/Criminal Division judge with more seniority. See Section II. B. These amendments were approved by the Circuit Judges at their meeting on August 7, 2018.

LAO 2017-04J: Amendments to the Family Court Plan were necessary after felony non-support criminal cases were moved from the civil/criminal division to the family division, in accordance with the "one family, one judge" principle. On August 13, 2015, the family bench approved LAO 2015-08, which included amendments to Section III.B.1., establishing how these cases will be assigned to family division judges. In addition, the names of the probate judges were added to Attachment I to reflect that they perform the duties of family division duty judge during their assigned week. This LAO reflects the elimination of probate judicial resources from the Family Court Plan.

Sixth Circuit Court – Family Court Plan
Appendix A – Family Judges

Judge	Courtroom	Family Court Term	6- Year Term Expiration Dates*
Lisa Gorcyca	W1	Jan 2010 – Present	Jan 2016
Lisa Langton, Presiding	W2	Jan 2015 – Present	Jan 2021
Julie McDonald	2F	Jan 2019 – Present	Jan 2025
Kameshia Gant	2A	Apr 2019 – Present	Apr 2025
Lorie Savin	3B	Jan 2021 – Present	Jan 2027
Maureen Kinsella	3A	Apr 2022 – Present	Apr 2028
Amanda Shelton	1A	Jan 2023 – Present	Jan 2029
Tricia Dare	3C	Jan 2025 – Present	Jan 2031

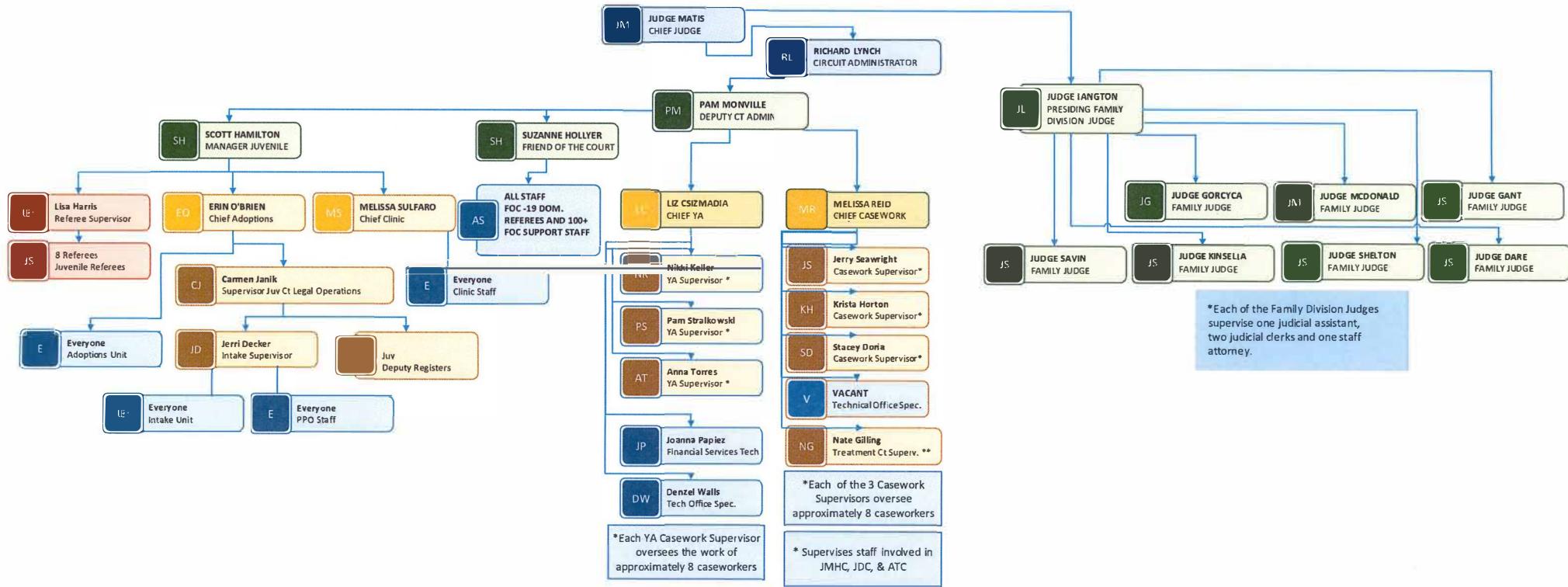
* A six-year term may be waived by the chief circuit judge to fulfill the goals of the FCP.

Sixth Circuit Court – Family Court Plan
Appendix B – Domestic Referees & Juvenile Referees

Domestic Referee	LAO	Judge Assigned
Libby Blanchard	2009-15	Lisa Langton
Peter K. Dever	2009-18	All – Chief Legal FOC/Judicial Assistant
Evanne L. Dietz	2009-19	All – Prosecutor Support Cases
Sahera G. Housey	2009-23	Lorie Savin
Alisa Martin	2009-25	Tricia Dare
Geoffrey Wojcikiewicz	2012-01	Lorie Savin
Catherine Weaver	2014-04	Lisa Gorcyca
Illyssa M. Cimmino	2014-09	Maureen H. Kinsella
Rebecca M. Decoster	2015-04	Amanda J. Shelton
Camille M. Dennis	2015-05	Maureen H. Kinsella
Susan L. Thorman	2017-01	All – Enforcement Docket
Ryan O’Neil	2017-03	Julie McDonald
Kathryn C. Mayer	2017-06	Kameshia D. Gant
Christopher J. Harrington	2017-07	Lisa Gorcyca
Rebecca K. Ellis	2017-08	Tricia Dare
Tyler R. Martinez	2018-11	Kameshia D. Gant
Shannon Haneline	2020-03	Julie McDonald
Nilda Reinosa	2021-09	Amanda Shelton
Michelle Letourneau-McAvoy	2022-02	Lisa Langton
Daniel Ferency	2025-01	All – Enforcement Docket

Juvenile Referee	LAO	Judge Assigned
Scott Hamilton	2009-09	All – Manager/Judicial Assistant
Lisa R. Harris	2015-02	All – Random assignment
Alexander Garthoff	2018-03	All – Random assignment
Patrick J. O’Meara	2019-01	All – Random assignment
David G. Bilson	2019-02	All – Random assignment
Nadine Hatten	2022-14	All – Random assignment
Justin Chmielewski	2024-03	All – Random assignment
Jeanette Kowaleski	2024-05	All – Random assignment
Rosston L. Ramsey	2024-06	All – Random assignment

Sixth Judicial Circuit Court Family Division Organizational Chart



As stated on page 1 of the FCP, the Sixth Judicial Circuit has a multi-judge family division and the Chief Circuit Court Judge has selected a presiding judge as indicated on Appendix A.

As stated on page 9 and in Appendix B, the Sixth Judicial Circuit Court employs attorney domestic referees in accordance with MCR 3.215 to hear motions, conduct settlement conferences, and provide recommended orders subject to judicial review. Each referee is assigned to a family division judge or a specialized docket and has a team of support staff including family counselors, case, custody, account, support, and interstate specialists dedicated to answer questions and provide ADR (as necessary) to litigants as referenced in MCL 600.1043. Pursuant to MCR 3.913, the court employs attorney juvenile referees to conduct preliminary inquiry to preside over hearings and to make recommended findings and conclusions.

Under the direction and supervision of the Deputy Court Administrator the court also employs juvenile caseworkers for pre and post juvenile court petitions. Pre-petition caseworkers who are assigned to Youth Assistance are partnered with local municipalities and school districts to provide assessments and to recommend referrals to children and families who may be at risk for future court involvement. Post-petition caseworkers provide investigation and recommendations to juvenile attorney referees and judges for youth programming and services who are subject to court involvement whether on a formal or on an informal diversionary court docket.

All judicial staff under the direction of the Chief Circuit Court Judge and Presiding Judge of Family assist in the overall case workflow and case management services advancing the goals of the family court plan of providing consistent judicial resources and expertise for efficient court operations and predictable outcomes for families within Oakland County.