STATE OF MICHIGAN 7TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT GENESEE COUNTY PROBATE COURT	**In Re:** **Family Court Plan**	JOINT LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER C07 2025-04J P25 2025-02J

7th Judicial Circuit Court and Genesee County Probate Court, 900 S. Saginaw St., Flint, MI 48502, (810) 257-3252

Rescinds Circuit Court Joint Local Administrative Order C07 2025-01J
Rescinds Probate Court Joint Local Administrative Order P25 2025-01J

IT IS ORDERED:

The following Family Court Plan is adopted by the 7th Judicial Circuit Court and Genesee County Probate Court. This plan comports with MCL 600.1001-600.1043 and Michigan Supreme Court Administrative Order 2003-2.

FAMILY DIVISION ESTABLISHMENT

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 and the chief judge has selected a presiding judge to serve in that capacity. See Appendix A for further detail.

B. Goals. The primary goal of the FCP is to adhere, to the extent practicable, to the concept of "one family-one judge" when assigning multiple cases within the family division involving members of the same family.[1] The FCP shall also further the goal of assigning a sufficient number of circuit and probate judges, as determined by the chief judge, to meet the workload of the division.

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 two (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. Every two (2) years from execution of this FCP, and otherwise upon a change to the judicial assignments, the presiding judge of the family division shall conduct a review with the advice and collaboration of the juvenile administrator, the friend of the court, and circuit court administrator. Any change(s) to the FCP shall be finalized by the chief judge.

[1] MCL 600.1023 provides, "When 2 or more matters within the 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 such case was assigned."

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. See Appendix A for the judges assigned to the family division.

   Judicial Expertise. Each judge listed in Appendix A 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.

2. 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.

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 cases will be assigned evenly by lot among the family division judges.

2. Definitions.

   For purposes of this FCP, the term "family" includes individuals who are related as husband and wife, parent, stepparent, guardian, child or sibling. An action may still be deemed to involve a "family" even when an unrelated individual is involved as a complainant or a party.

   For purposes of this FCP, the term "family member" means related by law or biology to one parent or same parents. This term is defined in more detail for case-specific issues throughout this document.

   For purposes of this FCP, the term "pending" means any domestic action, including post-judgment filings, that are awaiting a judicial determination; or any juvenile proceeding awaiting final disposition or resolution. This term is defined in more detail for case-specific issues throughout this document.

3. One Family-One Judge.

When a matter within the jurisdiction of the family division is filed, and a matter involving the same family is pending in the family division, the new case will be assigned to the judge assigned to the pending matter.

If a neglect or delinquency petition is filed and there is no previously filed and pending neglect or delinquency petition, a judge who was assigned to a previous petition that has been closed for 60 months or less, will be assigned to the new petition.

If it appears to any two judges that the interests of justice would be better served by reassignment of any case, and in accordance with the legislative intent expressed in 1996, PA 388 (i.e., "one family, one judge") any case may be reassigned from one judge to another with their consent and the approval of the chief judge.

If a pending domestic matter and a juvenile matter are assigned to different judges, the judges shall confer to determine if it is in the best interest of the parties that one judge be assigned to both cases.

If only one codefendant has a judge previously assigned, all codefendant cases will be assigned to that judge. If no codefendant had a previously assigned judge, there will be one blind draw and all codefendant cases will be assigned to that judge.

When there are two or more codefendants with judges previously assigned, all codefendant cases will be assigned to the judge with the oldest case which had activity in the past two years.

If the assigned judge is disqualified, an alternate family division judge will be re-assigned consistent with the requirements of MCR 2.003 and MCR 8.111.

One Family-One Judge Not Applicable

Consistent with problem-solving court best practices, if an individual subject to a child protective proceeding (i.e., child abuse and neglect) is eligible and becomes a participant in Family Dependency Treatment Court, the underlying child protective case shall be temporarily reassigned to the presiding problem-solving court judge. Upon conclusion of the problem-solving case, the temporary reassignment shall be terminated, and the matter shall proceed with the originally-assigned family division judge.

However, for purposes of assignment of any new or ancillary matters related to the underlying child protective proceeding that precipitated entry into Family Dependent Treatment Court, such new or ancillary cases shall be assigned to the originally-assigned family division judge.

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, JG, NA, NB, NC, PJ, PP, PW, TL, UE, UF, UI, UM, UN, VF, and VP. The ancillary case types included in the Plan are MI, LG, and GM. The following case types are not being used in the Plan: PH, JA, GA, GL, DD, CY, CA, and PO.

Mental Commitment Proceedings (MI, JA). The probate judges are primarily assigned to preside over petitions for mental health treatment. Family division judges may be required to preside, in the absence of both probate judges.

Minor Guardianship Proceedings (GM, LG). Petitions regarding the appointment of a guardian for a minor will be filed with the probate court. Intake review will be performed by the probate court clerk to determine if there is a pending family division matter to which the minor guardianship petition would be considered ancillary.

If the proposed filing is ancillary to a pending matter assigned to a currently serving family division judge, the minor guardianship petition will be assigned to that judge. Probate court clerical staff will communicate with the office of the assigned judge with respect to party notifications and scheduling.

If the minor guardianship petition does not have an ancillary connection, as defined in the below paragraph, the filing will be assigned to a probate judge. Probate court clerical staff will communicate with the office of the assigned judge with respect to party notifications and scheduling.

Any questions with respect to the assignment of minor guardianship filings, shall be brought to the attention of the chief judge for review and determination.

Ancillary Determination. For domestic matters (i.e., DC, DM, DO, DP, DS, DZ, PP case types), an ancillary case is defined as a pending case involving the family or family members of the minor. For juvenile matters (i.e., DL, NA case types), an ancillary case is defined as a pending case involving the minor.

Domestic Cases (DC, DM, DO, DP, DS, DZ).

Prior Action - When a search for a prior action discloses an existing case, the new filing will be assigned to the same judge. If the search for a prior action discloses more than one prior judge assignment, the case will be assigned to the judge with the oldest case. The search for a prior action includes the records of domestic relation cases and juvenile cases.

Domestic cases between the same parents shall be assigned to the judge with the oldest case involving the same parents.

Domestic cases will be assigned to the judge who is assigned to any pending juvenile case, as defined above.

A new domestic case, where an earlier domestic case exists, that involves the same male party or the same defendant, will be assigned to the judge assigned to the prior case.

Domestic cases involving a parent and a third party, where there is an earlier domestic matter involving parents of the same child(ren) at issue, will be assigned to the judge assigned to the earlier case with the same parents.

Name Changes (NC) are assigned randomly unless the requested change is on behalf of a minor and/or there is a prior domestic matter involving one of the parents.

Personal Protection Order Cases (PJ, PP).

A personal protection order case is assigned to the family division, except personal protection order cases involving stalking, case suffix "PH" shall be assigned by blind draw to the judges of the civil/criminal division.

When a personal protection order action is filed and the court records reflect a prior domestic relations or juvenile case involving the same parties, the personal protection order action shall be assigned to the judge who was assigned the previous domestic relations or juvenile case.

When a domestic relations case is filed and court records indicate a prior personal protection order action involving the same parties, the new case shall be assigned to the judge who was assigned the previous personal protection order action unless **two** or more years have passed without activity on the personal protection order action.

Adoptions (AB, AC, AD, AF, AG, AM, AN, AO, AU, AY).

Minor Adoption: When an adoption petition is filed for a minor, and a matter involving the same minor is pending in the family division, the new petition will be assigned to the judge assigned to the pending matter.

When an adoption petition is filed for a minor and there is no existing matter involving the same minor pending in the family division, the petition shall be assigned to the probate court judge assigned to guardianship proceedings in the probate court.

Adult Adoption: When an adoption petition is filed for an adult, the petition shall be assigned to the probate court judge assigned to guardianship proceedings in the probate court.

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 family division, then within the remaining bench, and finally by SCAO assignment.

2. Transfer. If a judge's service in the family division ends, that judge's existing caseload, including those matters unresolved and pending at the time service ends, shall be transferred to the successor judge.

3. If a previously filed case has been closed, and the judge assigned to the previously filed case is no longer assigned to that case type, specifically due to a family court plan or concurrent jurisdiction plan, any new or subsequent case arising out of the same transaction or occurrence will be assigned to the successor judge. MCR 8.111(C)(2). If the successor judge cannot be determined, the case will be assigned by blind draw.

4. 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 as Appendix B.

2. Remote Proceedings.

Each judge and referee will have the discretion of using remote proceedings under MCR 2.408. All hearings that ear conducted via remote proceedings must comply with MCR 2.408. More specific uses of remote proceedings are specified below:

The family division judges use remote proceedings for testimonial proofs for hearings under MCR 3.210(A)(4). Judge regularly perform settlement conferences via remove proceedings.

Juvenile proceedings are regularly held via video conferencing, with permission of the court. Trials are held in-person. Video conferencing is utilized for hearings involving youth housed at the Juvenile Justice Center and residential placements; emergency preliminary hearings; MDHHS workers reporting out-of-county, and for other remote parties.

Domestic matters held before attorney-referees are regularly held via video conferencing, including, but not limited to, complaints for paternity and motions for parenting time, custody, or modification of child support. Evidentiary hearings are held in-person.

3. Facilities.

Genesee County Courthouse
900 S. Saginaw St., Flint, MI 48502

The Genesee County Courthouse is the location for the legal records division, juvenile records office, juvenile referee offices and hearing rooms, court administration, circuit/probate judicial offices and courtrooms, and probate court records office.

The courthouse includes a private pumping station for nursing mothers, baby-changing restrooms, and private offices for attorney-client meetings.

A prominent location within the courthouse is the Legal Resource Center (LRC). The LRC features a private space for personal protection order (PPO) processing and filings, to allow vulnerable individuals to engage with intake staff regarding circumstances related to their PPO filing. The YWCA has a presence in the LRC to provide resources for domestic violence victims to coordinate safe housing, in addition to assisting with PPOs. The LRC includes restrooms with changing tables. A center director and two paralegals assist pro per litigants on a daily basis with family/domestic filings.

Genesee County Juvenile Justice Center
4287 Pasadena Ave., Flint, MI 48504

The Genesee County Juvenile Justice Center (JJC) is a licensed court-operated facility for supporting short-term programming for male and female youth ages 10-18 years of age, who are court-ordered into the JJC pending the court's disposition of the youth's case. The JJC provides detention programming, educational services, health services, vocational training, among several other services geared toward structure and support for court-involved youth.

McCree Courts and Human Services Building
630 Saginaw St., Flint, MI 48502

The McCree Courts and Human Services Building is the location for the juvenile probation department and the Friend of the Court (FOC).

The FOC area includes domestic referee offices and hearing rooms. The FOC space also includes toys for children, along with books and snacks. The public restrooms include baby-changing tables.

E. RECORDS MANAGEMENT

1. The circuit court legal records division is designated as the custodian of the family division domestic relations case files. The juvenile records division is the custodian of the family division juvenile case files. The probate court records office shall maintain every record created by or filed with the probate court.

2. Plan Development. The county clerk has participated in the development of this plan for management of court records and is an active partner in the management of court records to which this FCP applies.

3. Filing. Court documents for domestic relations cases are filed at the legal records division. Court documents for juvenile cases are filed at the juvenile records division.

4. Access Points. The juvenile records division and the legal records division are the central points of access for information for the public, citizens, litigants and attorneys regarding access to courts and court operations, such as where to file documents, how records are stored and how records may be accessed.

5. Internal Transfer. There is a process for internal transfer of files. Additionally, there is an imaging system that allows users to electronically view court documents.

6. Technological Access. Domestic cases and documents are available in electronic format, via the OnBase document management system. The filing and processing of PPOs are completed using an electronic workflow.

   Family division judges are referees have access to the following case management systems: JIS (for juvenile matters) and WebTCS (for domestic cases).

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

This Order shall be effective upon approval of the State Court Administrative Office.

David J. Newblatt
Chief Judge
7th Judicial Circuit Court
Genesee County Probate Court

4/9/26
Date

Jennie E. Barkey
Presiding/Senior Judge
Genesee County Probate Court

4-9-26
Date

APPENDIX A

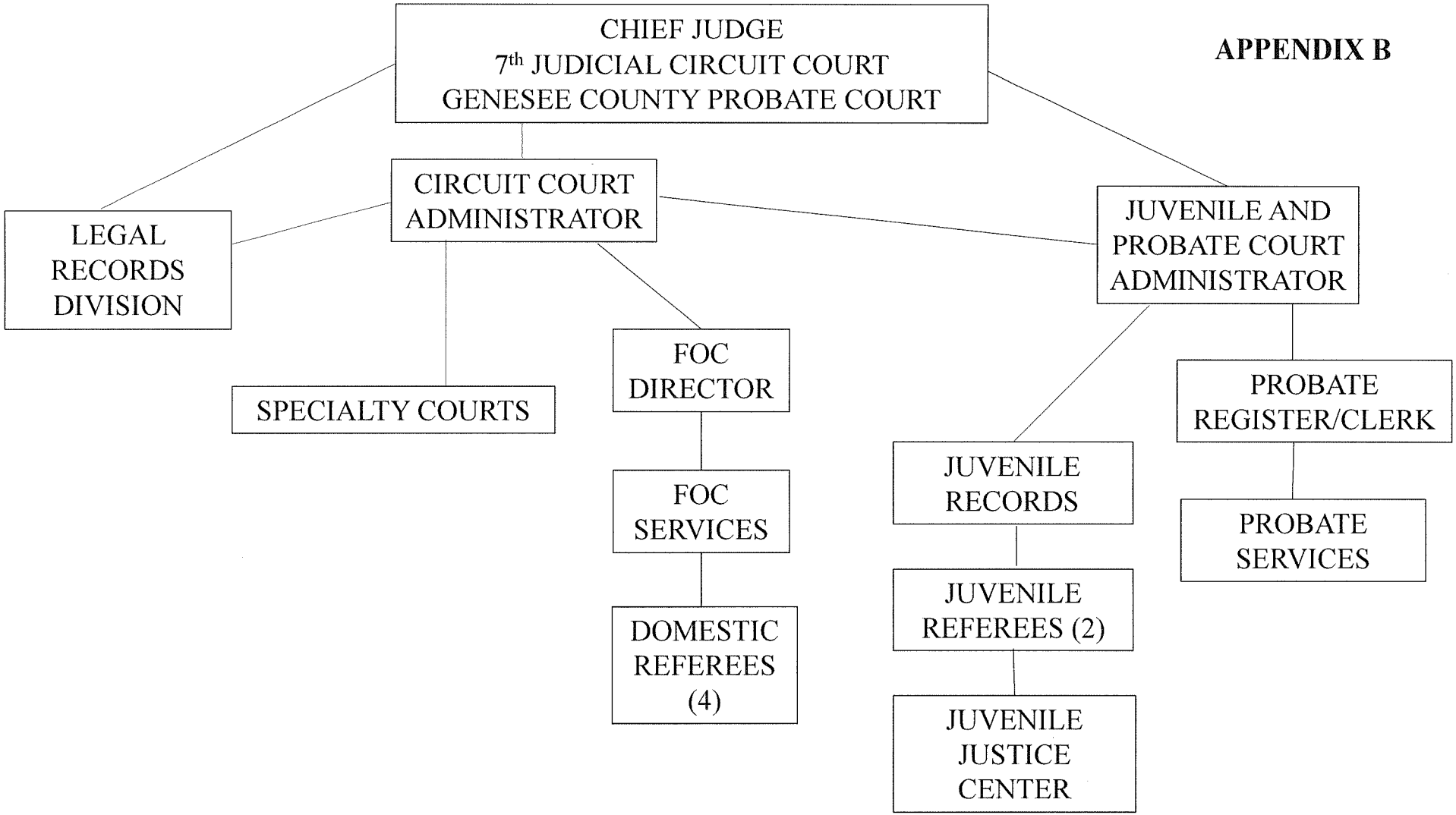
Judges Assigned to the Family Division

Mary A. Hood
Circuit Judge
Term began: January 1, 2025
Term expires: January 1, 2031

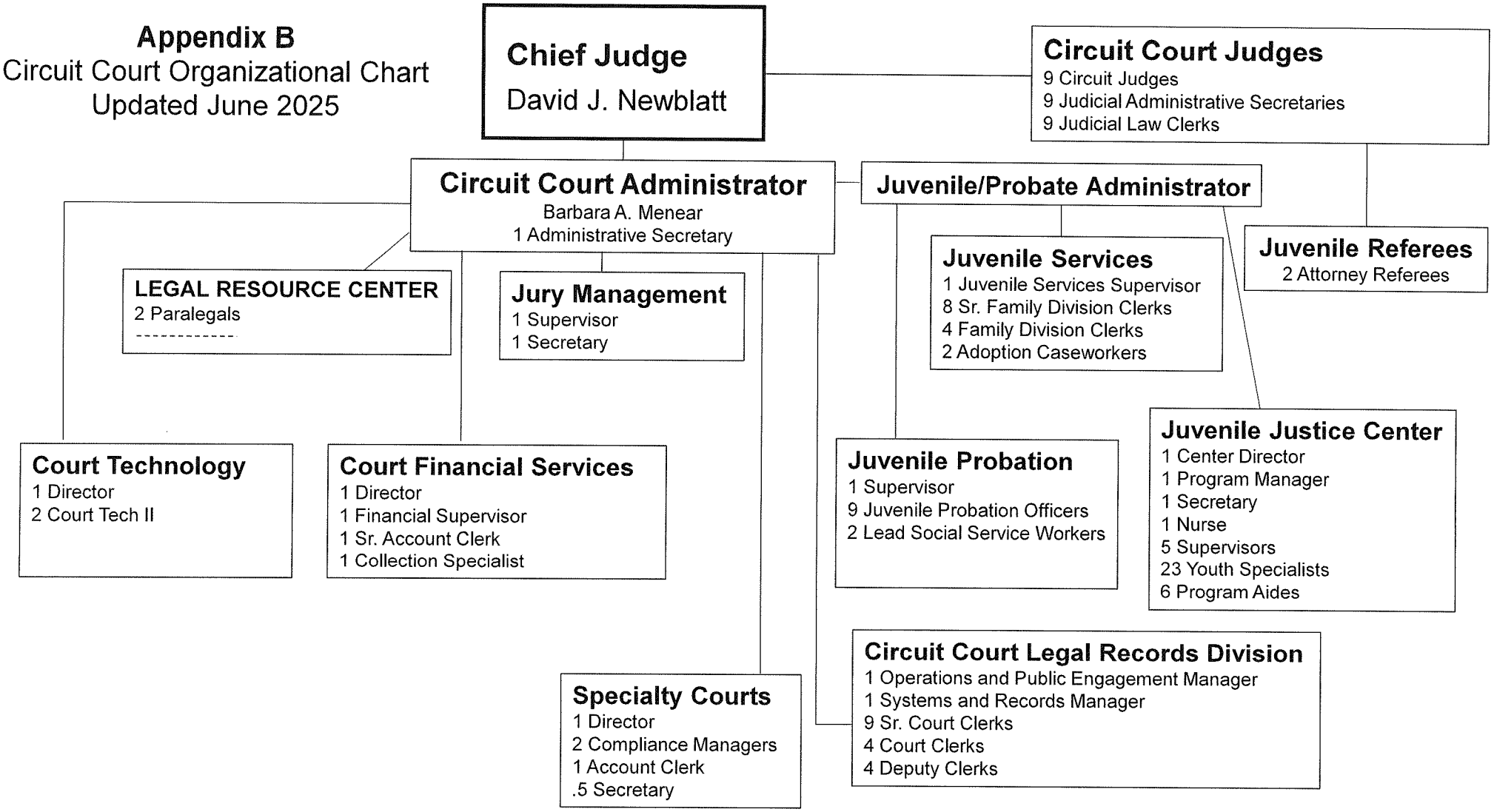
Anthony J. McDowell
Circuit Judge
Presiding Judge, Family Division
Term began: October 14, 2024
Term expires: January 1, 2027

Dawn M. Weier
Circuit Judge
Term began: January 1, 2023
Term expires: January 1, 2029

APPENDIX B

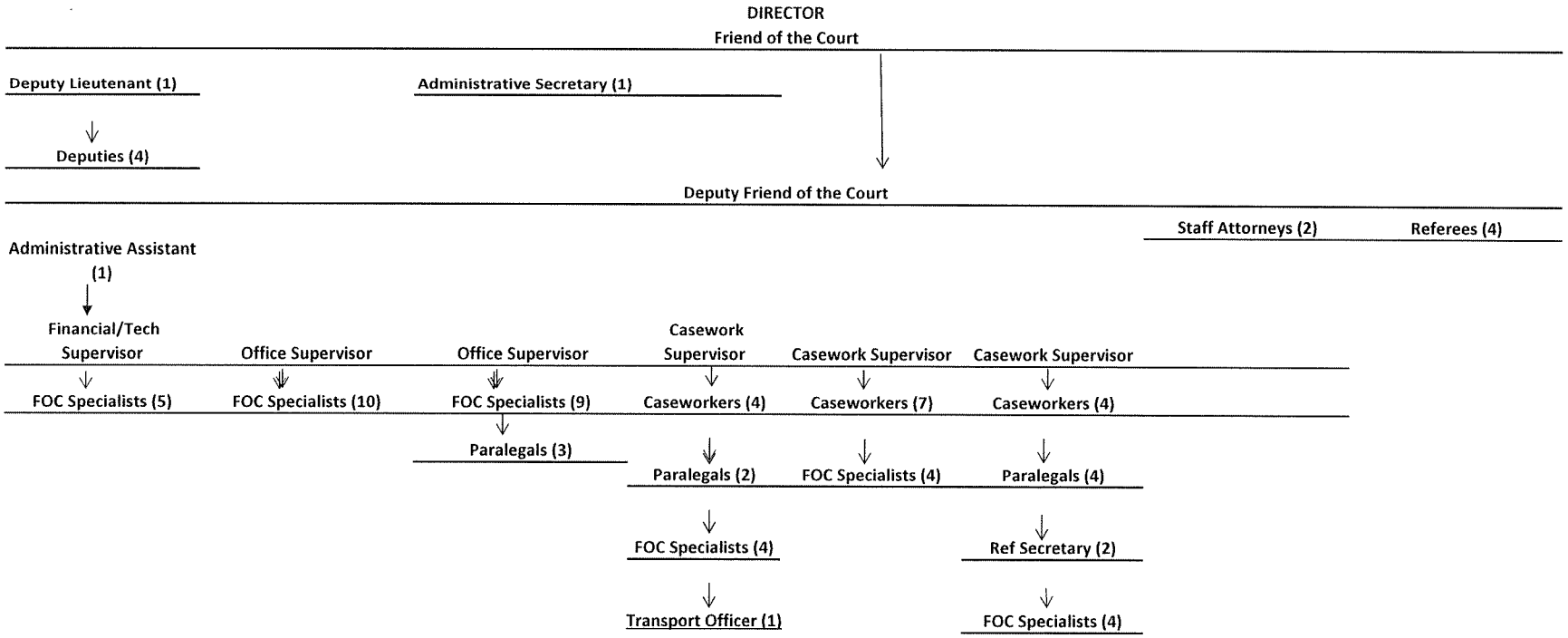

CHIEF JUDGE
7th JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT
GENESEE COUNTY PROBATE COURT
CIRCUIT COURT ADMINISTRATOR
JUVENILE AND PROBATE COURT ADMINISTRATOR
LEGAL RECORDS DIVISION
SPECIALTY COURTS
FOC DIRECTOR
FOC SERVICES
DOMESTIC REFEREES (4)
JUVENILE RECORDS
JUVENILE REFEREES (2)
JUVENILE JUSTICE CENTER
PROBATE REGISTER/CLERK
PROBATE SERVICES

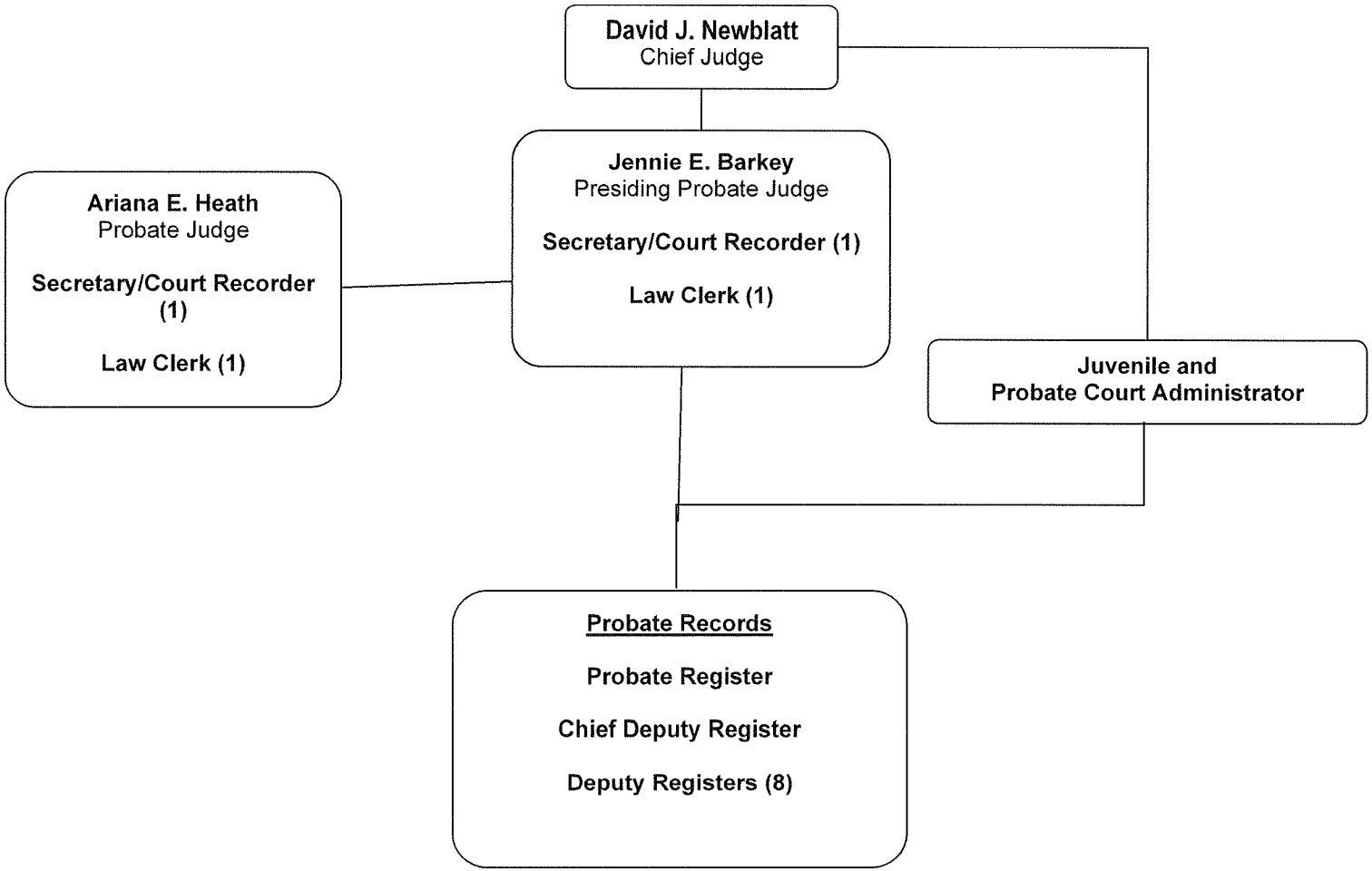
Appendix B
Circuit Court Organizational Chart
Updated June 2025



Appendix B

Friend of the Court



Genesee County Probate Court 2025

Appendix B
Probate Court