STATE OF MICHIGAN
WEXFORD AND MISSAUKEE COUNTIES

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MISSAUKEE PROBATE JUDGE
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COREY WIGGINS
84th DISTRICT COURT JUDGE

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WEXFORD PROBATE JUDGE
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STATE OF MICHIGAN
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE COUNTY OF
MISSAUKEE AND WEXFORD

FAMILY COURT PLAN
FOR THE 28th CIRCUIT COURT
MISSAUKEE PROBATE
WEXFORD PROBATE

LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

C28 2025-09J (Rescinds 2024-03J)
P57 2025-08J (Rescinds 2024-03J)
P83 2025-07J (Rescinds 2024-03J)

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 details.***

B. Goals. The goals of this Family Case Plan (FCP) are to promote and support the "one family – one judge" model while also ensuring: (1) subject matter expertise in family law matters; (2) access to information across all relevant case files; (3) efficient and effective court operations; and (4) consistency and predictability in proceedings for families.

C. Operation. This FCP supersedes all previously approved plans governing the operation of the Family Division. The Plan shall be reviewed and revised as necessary, including when family division judicial assignments change, and no less frequently than every two (2) years. The review shall be conducted by the Chief Circuit Judge and the Chief Probate Judge to ensure continued compliance with applicable statutory requirements and with the *Family Court Plan Requirements and Guidelines* issued by the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO).

II. ADMINISTRATION

A. JUDICAL 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.
   - Judge Melissa Ransom, Missaukee Probate Court Judge, Presiding Judge Missaukee Family Division
     - January 2019-Present
     - No anticipated expiration of term
   - Judge Jason Elmore, 28th Circuit Court Judge
     - January 2020 – Present
     - No anticipated expiration of term
   - Judge Edward Van Alst, Wexford Probate Court Judge and Presiding Judge Wexford Family Division
     - December 2017 – present
     - No expected expiration of term

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. Each judge assigned to the Family Division shall remain current on developments in family law through continued education, including participation in webinars, in-person trainings, and relevant legal conferences.

3. Judicial Service. All three judges will serve part-time in the family division. Judge Ransom shall cover all DM, DL, NA and PPO filings in Missaukee County. Judge Elmore shall cover all DO cases for both Missaukee and Wexford Counties and non-domestic PPO's for Wexford County. Judge Van Alst shall cover all DM, DL, NA and domestic PPO's for Wexford County.

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 the 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 shall be assigned to the judges serving in the Family Division based on MCR 8.111 and pursuant to a separate local administrative order. Cases shall be assigned through said local administrative order based on the judicial resources available and particular judicial expertise. The local administrative order regarding case assignments will also provide for how cases will be assigned as a result of disqualification of judges.

2. For purposes of this FCP, the term "family" means: a basic social unit consisting of parents and their children, considered as a group, whether dwelling together or not.

   For purposes of this FCP, the term "family member" means: mother, father, daughter, or son of the same family as defined in this FCP, above.

   For purposes of this FCP, the term "pending" means: not yet resolved.

3. One Family-One Judge. This court will align cases with the "one family-one judge" requirement except when not practicable such as (but not limited to) after-hours verbal ERPO requests by law enforcement or criminal violations of personal protection orders.

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, PH, PJ, PP, PW, UE, UF, UI, UM, UN, VF, and VP. The ancillary case types that are not included in the Plan are BR, and JA. These matters are handled solely by the probate court as if they are probate matters. TL is not a part of the family plan.

6. Concurrent Cases. These assignment procedures support the "one family-one judge" requirements with concurrent cases. For example, paternity cases with concurrent NA, DL, or DJ cases.

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, that judge's successor, or will be resolved by that judge prior to leaving the family division.

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

D. STAFFING AND FACILITIES

1. Administrative Structure. A family division organizational chart is included as ***Appendix A and Organization Chart for each county.***

2. Remote Proceedings. The courts and this Plan shall comply with MCR 2.408. Each judge to whom a case is assigned may, upon request of any participant or on the court's own motion, permit the use of videoconferencing technology by any participant in any civil proceeding.

E. RECORDS MANAGEMENT

1. Clerks of the Court. The Wexford and Missaukee County Clerks are

designated as the Clerk of the Court for the Family Division. The Wexford & Missaukee Couty Juvenile Court Administrators shall maintain every record created by or filed with the probate / juvenile court.

2. Plan Development. The County Clerks have been afforded the opportunity to participate in the development of plans for management of court records. They were afforded the opportunity to submit a letter with the plan and have elected not to do so.

3. Filing. In Missaukee County, AB, AC, AD, AF, AG, AM, AN, AO, AU, AY, BR, DJ, DL, EM, JA, JG, NA, NB, NC, PJ, PW, and VF cases shall be filed with the probate/juvenile court. All other family court cases shall be filed with the county clerk (Clerk of the Court.) In Wexford County, all family court cases including: 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, PH, PJ, PP, PW, UE, UF, UI, UM, UN, VF, and VP, shall be filed with the Wexford County Clerk. Concurrent probate matters shall be filed in the probate court.

4. Access Points. The public may access family court case information by coming in person to the courthouse to the window of the office responsible for retention of documents as noted in E3, above.

5. Technological Access. This court is continuously working with county IT staff as funds are available to update technological access to its documents.

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

October 8, 2025

Judge Jason Elmore
28th Circuit Court Judge

October 9, 2025

Judge Melissa Ransom
Presiding Judge, Missaukee Family Division

October 10, 2025

Judge Edward Van Alst
Presiding Judge, Wexford Family Division

APPENDIX A
FAMILY COURT STRUCTURE

Presiding Judge – Missaukee Family Division, Melissa J. Ransom, Missaukee Probate Judge

Presiding Judge—Wexford County Family Division, Judge Edward Van Alst, Wexford Probate Judge

Circuit Judge Jason Elmore, 28th Circuit Court

Friend of the Court, Robert Kulpa

The Friend of the Court manages the FOC offices and staff.

Friend of the Court Referee, Benjamin Hicok

Is an attorney-referee who is responsible for the initial hearings on cases related to custody, support, parenting time, & paternity.

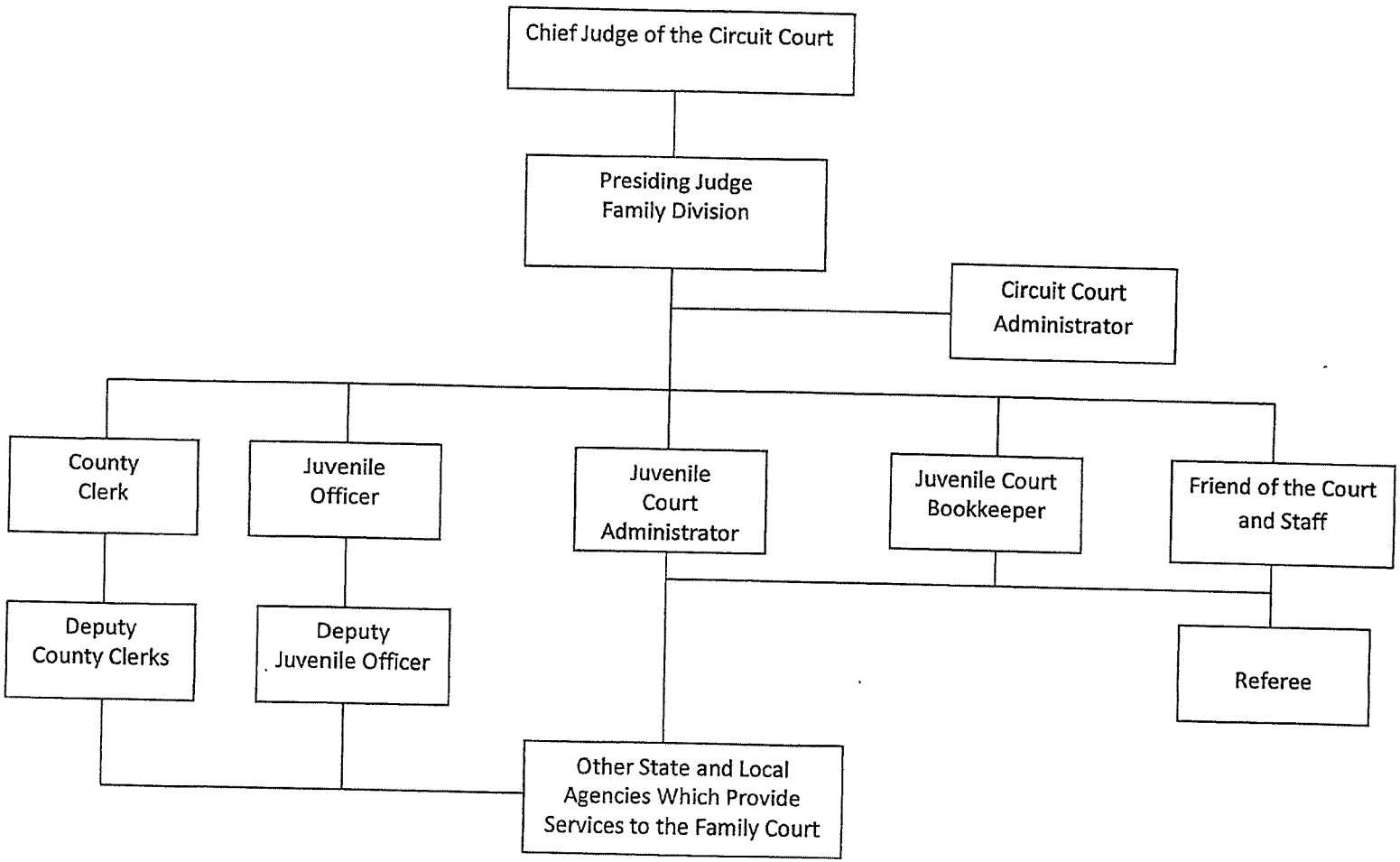
Wexford County Clerk Family Court Administrator, Alaina Nyman, Wexford County
The Wexford County Clerk is responsible for managing the files for all matters relating to juvenile delinquency, abuse and neglect, personal protection matters related to minors, adoptions, name changes, parental waiver cases and emancipation matters.

Missaukee County Family Court Administrator, Kelsey O'Dell, Missaukee County
The family court administrator is responsible for supervising juvenile probation officers and managing the budget and files for all matters related to juvenile delinquency, abuse and neglect, personal protection matters related to minors, and adoption. The administrator manages all staff who are under the authority of the probate court judge

Wexford County Probate Register, Kim Recca, Wexford County
The probate register is responsible for managing the files and staff for all matters related to guardianships, conservatorships and mental health matters.

Missaukee County Probate Register, Kelsey O'Dell Missaukee County
The probate register is responsible for managing the files and staff for all matters related to name changes, all guardianships, all conservatorships, parental waiver cases, emancipation, and mental health matters.

WEXFORD COUNTY FAMILY COURT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



MISSAUKEE COUNTY FAMILY COURT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

