

**STATE OF MICHIGAN
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE COUNTY OF BAY**

**FAMILY COURT PLAN
FOR THE 18th CIRCUIT COURT
AND THE 9th PROBATE COURT**

LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

Circuit Court Joint Local Administrative Order 2025-01J

Probate Court Joint Local Administrative Order P09-2025-01J

Rescinds Circuit Court Joint Local Administrative Order 2016-03J

Rescinds Probate Court Joint Local Administrative Order P09-2016-01J

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 judge and the 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 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 goal(s) of this FCP are to enhance the subject matter expertise of the probate and circuit court judges, ensure access to information, exceed the standards for efficient court operation, provide consistency and predictability for families, and adhering to the requirements of one family-one judge.
- 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 judge and probate judge to ensure that the Plan meets the

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

II. ADMINISTRATION

This Section shall include:

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. Attached to this Plan is Addendum A, which lists the probate and circuit judges that will be serving in the family division.
2. **Judicial Expertise.** New judges 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. Further, those serving in the Family Division are encouraged to seek additional training through judicial associations and organizations that would enhance their knowledge in the subject matter.
3. **Judicial Service.** The listed judges in “the Plan” will serve in the family division, under MCL 600.1011(3), where sufficient caseload and judicial resources exists. Judge Dawn A. Klida will serve full-time in the family division and will be assigned 50% of domestic relations case files. Judge Joseph K. Sheeran will be assigned 25% of all domestic relations case files. Judge Jessie S. Wood will be assigned 25% of all domestic relations case files. Family division proceedings under the juvenile and adoption code will be assigned solely to Judge Jan A. Miner, who has specialized training regarding these matters.

District Court Judge sitting as a Circuit Court Judge, Dawn A. Klida, and Circuit Court Judge Joseph K. Sheeran will be retiring on January 1, 2027. It is likely that the legislature will authorize these seats to be continued both as circuit court seats. In any event, two new judges will be joining the Bay County court system on January 1, 2027. This Plan will be reviewed when it is known who the new judges will be and in what areas they have legal experience and expertise, along with what their level of interest is in serving in Family Court.

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.

2. **Definitions.**

For purposes of this FCP, the term “family” means: individuals united by birth, marriage, or adoption.

For purposes of this FCP, the term “family member” means: a party sharing a common child, spouse, or parent with another party.

For purposes of this FCP, the term “pending” means: pre-judgment or a matter currently in process, awaiting a final judgment or decision from the court.

3. **One Family-One Judge.** Cases shall be assigned pursuant to II(A)(3). When practical, cases will be assigned to the same judge if a matter involving the same family is pending, recently closed, or is inactive with the court.
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.** If a new family court case is filed, and another family court case with the same family is pending, the new case shall be reassigned to the judge overseeing the family court case that was filed first.

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 that judge's successor.
3. **Dispute.** Any dispute on proper reassignment shall be resolved by the chief judge.

D. STAFFING AND FACILITIES

1. **Administrative Structure.** A family division organizational chart is included as Appendix A. The chief judge has supervisory authority over the administration of the family division of the circuit court. The chief judge has the authority and flexibility to determine the duration of a judge's service in the family division and to delegate supervision based on the goal of this FCP. All positions described in the organizational chart in Appendix A work to enhance the goals of the FCP while optimizing an efficient and fair workload.

The family division of the circuit court is comprised of circuit and probate court judges. The Friend of the Court shall assist and provide services to and for family division, working to establish, modify, and enforce orders on domestic relations matters. The friend of the court and personnel of this office are under the jurisdiction and control of the chief judge.

The juvenile division of the circuit court, including the personnel of this division are under the jurisdiction and control of the chief judge and probate court judge.

The Bay County youth facility is operated by the Bay County Executive.

2. **Remote Proceedings.** Each judge and referee will have the discretion of using remote proceedings in compliance with MCR 2.408.
3. **Facilities.** The Circuit Court, Probate Court, and Friend of the Court, are all located inside the Bay County Courthouse, located at 1230 Washington Avenue, Bay City, MI 48708. This eliminates any potential location barriers for providing services under this Plan. The courthouse offers several private rooms available for attorneys to meet with their clients, or for families to meet in a private setting.

The youth detention facility is located at 520 West Hampton Road, Essexville, MI 48732.

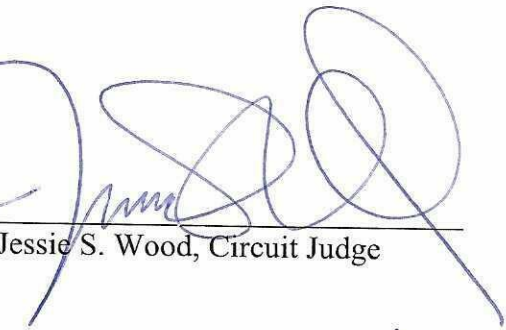
The Sheriff's department is located next door to the Courthouse. This allows for onsite security for the courthouse.

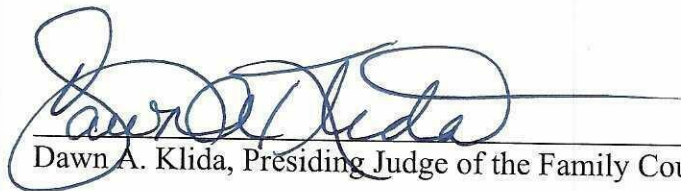
E. RECORDS MANAGEMENT

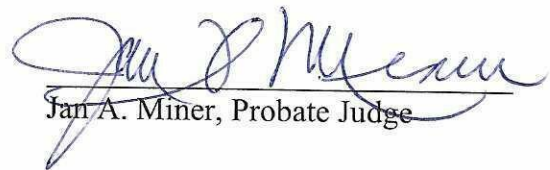
1. **Clerks of the Court.** The Bay County Clerk is designated as the Clerk of the Court for the Family Division. The Bay County Probate Clerk shall maintain every record created by or filed with the Probate Court.
2. **Plan Development.** The County Clerk has been afforded the opportunity to participate in the development of plans for management of court records. A letter from the County Clerk is attached to this Plan.
3. **Filing.** All filings for the family court shall be filed with the Circuit Court Clerk's office, located at the Bay County Courthouse, located at 1230 Washington Avenue, Bay City, MI 484708. All delinquency, abuse/neglect, and adoption filings shall be filed at the Probate Court Clerk's Office, located in the same building. Stored records for probate court can be found within the Probate Court Clerk's Office. Due to space limitations, for family court cases filed with the Circuit Court Clerk's Office, please check to see if your file is located inside their office, or located at the Bay County Building, 515 Center Avenue, Bay City, MI 48708.
4. **Access Point.** The public may visit www.baycountymi.gov for additional information and services. The Bay County Courthouse has public computers and access to public case searches, along with access to Westlaw for any legal research.
5. **Internal Transfer.** The Circuit Court utilizes JIS case management systems and relies on physical court files within the courtrooms for filings made within the Clerk's Office. The Friend of the Court utilizes OnBase as their document management service. The Probate Court also utilizes JIS as their case management system, and OnBase as their electronic document storage. The probate judge and court staff have access to these electronic copies as desired. There are no physical files maintained in Probate Court.
6. **Technological Access.** All family division judges and referees have timely technological access to all family division cases.
7. **Public Access.** This FCP is posted on the court's website and is otherwise publicly available upon request.

Date: 10/8/2025


Joseph K. Sheeran, Chief Judge


Jessie S. Wood, Circuit Judge


Dawn A. Klida, Presiding Judge of the Family Court


Jan A. Miner, Probate Judge

ADDENDUM A

Circuit Judges serving in the Family Division of the 18th Circuit Court:

Judge Joseph K. Sheeran (Chief Judge)

Term commenced on January 1, 2021. Term expires on January 1, 2027.

Judge Jessie S. Wood

Term commenced on January 1, 2023. Term expires on January 1, 2029.

Probate Judge serving in the family division of the 18th Circuit Court:

Judge Jan A Miner

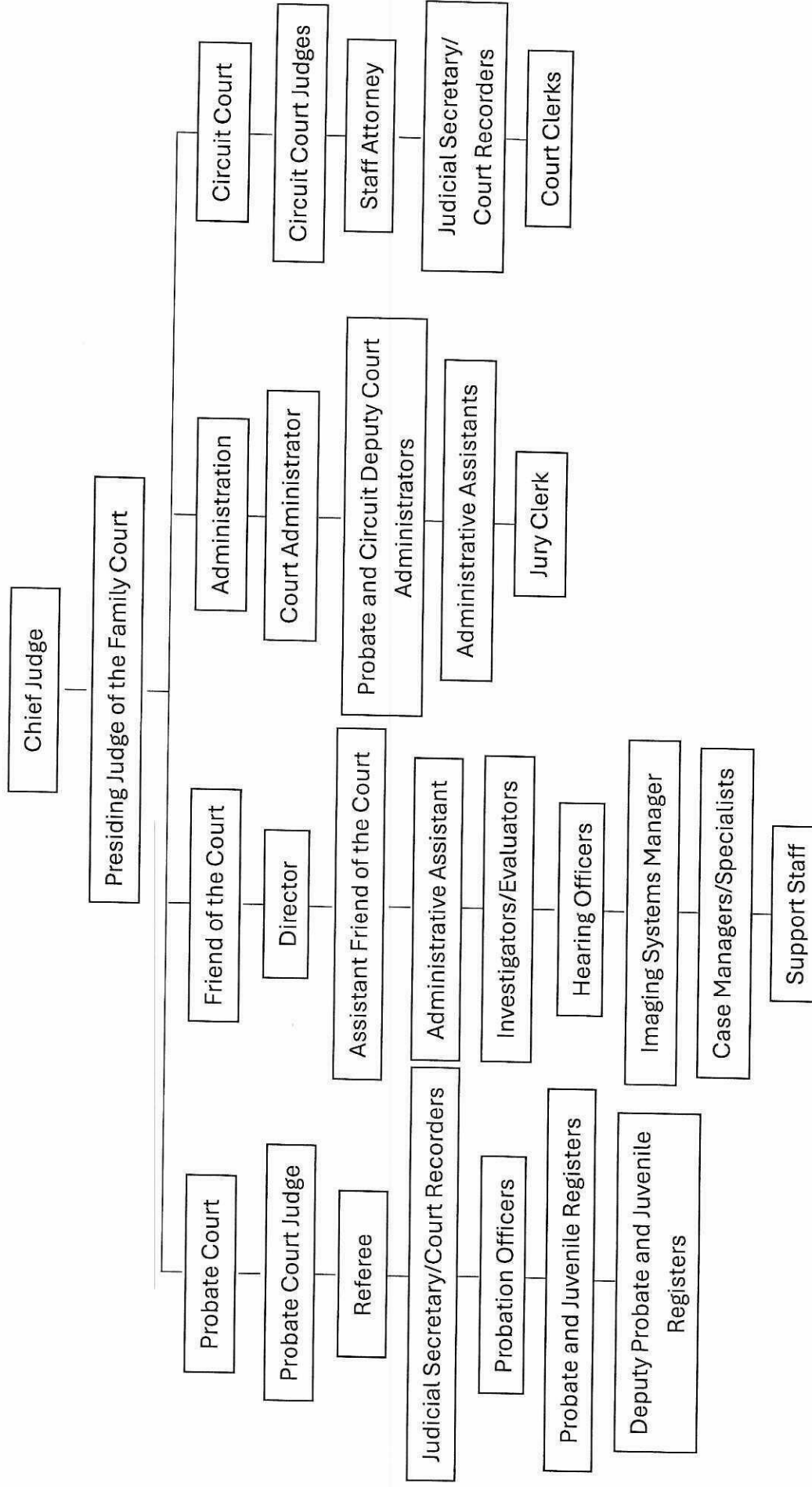
Term commenced on January 1, 2025. Term expires on January 1, 2031.

District Judges serving in the Family Division of the 18th Circuit Court by assignment:

Judge Dawn A. Klida

Term commenced on January 1, 2021. Term expires on January 1, 2027.

18th Circuit Court-Family Division Organizational Chart





**OFFICE OF
BAY COUNTY CLERK**

Kathleen B. Zanolli
County Clerk

515 Center Avenue, Suite 101
Bay City, Michigan 48708
Tel: (989) 895-4280 | Fax: (989) 895-4284

August 22, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

As the Bay County Clerk, I have been afforded the opportunity to participate in the development of plans for management of court records. I concur with the Plan regarding management of court records.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "K. Zanolli".

Kathleen Zanolli
Bay County Clerk