

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT, SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR PASCO AND PINELLAS COUNTIES, FLORIDA**

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 2020-023 PI-CIR

**RE: ASSIGNMENT OF CIRCUIT CIVIL, FAMILY LAW, COUNTY CIVIL, AND
SMALL CLAIMS CASES IN PINELLAS COUNTY**

In order to provide for the assignment of cases in the circuit civil, family law, county civil, and small claims divisions in Pinellas County; and

In accordance with Article V, section 2, Florida Constitution, Rule of Judicial Administration 2.215, § 43.26, Florida Statutes, and Sixth Judicial Circuit Local Rules, it is

ORDERED:

1. The Pinellas Clerk of the Circuit Court (Clerk) is directed to assign all cases filed in the circuit civil, family law, county civil, and small claims divisions in accordance with this Administrative Order and the Local Rules.

2. For the **Circuit Civil Division**, cases will be assigned based upon the Zone Improvement Plan (ZIP) code of the plaintiff's attorney or if the plaintiff is unrepresented, the ZIP code of the plaintiff, except as provided in this Administrative Order.

- a. Cases filed from the following Pinellas County ZIP codes are to be assigned using an equal, at random, blind assignment system to sections 7, 15, and 20 in Clearwater, so that each section is assigned essentially the same number of new cases:

33755; 33756; 33757; 33758; 33759; 33760; 33761; 33762; 33763; 33764; 33765;
33766; 33767; 33769; 33770; 33771; 33774; 33775; 33778; 33779; 33785; 33786;
34660; 34677; 34681; 34682; 34683; 34684; 34685; 34688; 34689; 34695; 34697;
34698; 33540; 33541; 33542; 33543; 33544; 33545; 33523; 33524; 33525; 33526;
33537; 33539; 33549; 33559; 33574; 33576; 33593; 33597; 33849; 33549; 33548;
33556; 33558; 34610; 34637; 34638; 34639; 34652; 34653; 34654; 34655; 34656;
34667; 34668; 34669; 34673; 34674; 34679; 34680; 34690; 34691; 34692.

- b. Cases filed from the following Pinellas County ZIP codes are to be assigned using an equal, at random, blind assignment system to sections 11, 13, and 19 in St. Petersburg, so that each section is assigned essentially the same number of new cases:

33701; 33702; 33703; 33704; 33705; 33706; 33707; 33708; 33709; 33710; 33711;
33712; 33713; 33714; 33715; 33716; 33729; 33730; 33731; 33732; 33733; 33734;
33736; 33737; 33738; 33740; 33741; 33742; 33743; 33744; 33747; 33772; 33773;
33776; 33777; 33780; 33781; 33782; 33784.

- c. Cases filed under § 394.910 et. seq, Fla. Stat., (Jimmy Ryce) are to all be assigned to section 60.

- d. Cases filed under § 932.704, Fla. Stat., (civil forfeiture) are to all be assigned to

section 001.

- e. Petitions for a writ of habeas corpus shall be assigned to section 77, except:
 - i. Petitions for a writ of habeas corpus filed in the appellate division of the circuit court shall be assigned to the section for the appellate administrative judge;
 - ii. Petitions for a writ of habeas corpus arising from a probate matter are to be assigned to the section for the probate administrative judge; and
 - iii. Petitions for a writ of habeas corpus arising from a juvenile dependency or delinquency matter are to be assigned to the section for the Unified Family Court administrative judge.
- f. Cases will be assigned to section 77 (Chief Judge civil section) and 78 (senior judge civil section) as directed by the Chief Judge.
- g. Cases transferred from county court to circuit court when a claim or counter claim exceeds the jurisdiction of the county court shall be assigned to Circuit Civil section 91N for Clearwater County Civil and Small Claims sections or Circuit Civil section 91S for St. Petersburg County Civil and Small Claims sections.
- h. Unless otherwise provided for in this Administrative Order, cases with an out of county ZIP code, an unknown ZIP code, or a ZIP code not listed in this Administrative Order are to be assigned in a manner that results in an even distribution of the cases among all civil sections in Clearwater and St. Petersburg.
- i. The Administrative Office of the Courts will review the case distribution at least semi-annually and as needed adjust the percentage of such cases that are to be assigned to Clearwater sections and St. Petersburg sections in order to equalize the workload.

3. For the **Circuit Family Division**, cases will be assigned based upon the ZIP code of the petitioner's attorney or if the petitioner is unrepresented, the ZIP code of the petitioner, except as provided in this Administrative Order.

- a. Family law cases filed from the following Pinellas County ZIP codes are to be assigned using an equal, at random, blind assignment system to sections 14, 22, 23, and 25 in Clearwater, so that each section is assigned essentially the same number of new cases:
33755; 33756; 33757; 33758; 33759; 33760; 33761; 33762; 33763; 33764; 33765;
33766; 33767; 33769; 33770; 33771; 33772; 33773; 33774; 33775; 33776; 33777;
33778; 33779; 33780; 33784; 33785; 33786; 34660; 34677; 34681; 34682; 34683;
34684; 34685; 34688; 34689; 34692; 34695; 34697; 34698.
- b. Family law cases filed from the following Pinellas County ZIP codes are to be assigned using an equal, at random, blind assignment system to sections 9, 12, 17, and 24 in St. Petersburg, so that each section is assigned essentially the same number of new cases:
33701; 33702; 33703; 33704; 33705; 33706; 33707; 33708; 33709; 33710; 33711;

33712; 33713; 33714; 33715; 33716; 33729; 33730; 33731; 33732; 33733; 33734;
33736; 33737; 33738; 33740; 33741; 33742; 33743; 33744; 33747; 33781; 33782.

- c. Cases will be assigned to section 79 (senior judge family law section) as directed by the Chief Judge.
- d. The legal services providers for the Department of Revenue shall identify for the Clerk whether a Title IV-D case should be assigned to a North or South County family law section in accordance with the ZIP code plan in this paragraph. The assignment to Clearwater or St. Petersburg shall be based upon the ZIP code of the individual petitioner, and not the ZIP code of the legal services provider.
- e. Unless otherwise provided for in this Administrative Order, cases with an out of county ZIP code, an unknown ZIP code, or a ZIP code not listed in this Administrative Order are to be assigned in a manner that results in an even distribution of the cases among all family law sections in Clearwater and St. Petersburg. The Administrative Office of the Courts will review the case distribution at least semi-annually and as needed adjust the percentage of such cases that are to be assigned to Clearwater sections and St. Petersburg sections in order to equalize the workload.
- f. Simplified dissolution of marriage cases filed from the ZIP codes listed in paragraph 3(a) (Clearwater sections) will be assigned to Circuit Family section 81N. Simplified dissolution of marriage cases filed from the ZIP codes listed in paragraph 3(b) (St. Petersburg sections) will be assigned to Circuit Family section 81S.
- g. Petitions for an injunction for protection against dating violence, domestic violence, repeat violence, sexual violence, and stalking will be assigned in accordance with this Administrative Order. The return hearings will be calendared in accordance with a separate administrative order on a yearly basis.
- h. Adoption petitions for adoption of relatives, adoption of adults, and adoption of step-children where no termination of parental rights petition has been filed shall be assigned in accordance with this Administrative Order. Step-parent adoption petitions accompanied by a petition for termination of parental rights are to be assigned to a Unified Family Court (UFC) section in accordance with separate Administrative Orders governing assignment of UFC cases, which is currently Administrative Order 2018-008.

4. For the **County Civil and Small Claims Divisions**, cases will be assigned based upon the ZIP code of the plaintiff's attorney or if the plaintiff is unrepresented, the ZIP code of the plaintiff, except as provided in this Administrative Order.

- a. **County Civil** cases filed from the following Pinellas County ZIP codes are to be assigned using an equal, at random, blind assignment system to sections 41 and 42 in Clearwater so that each section is assigned essentially the same number of new county civil cases. **County Small Claims** cases filed from the following Pinellas County ZIP codes are to be assigned using an equal, at random, blind assignment system to

sections 47 and 48 in Clearwater, so that each section is assigned essentially the same number of new county small claims cases.

33755; 33756; 33757; 33758; 33759; 33760; 33761; 33762; 33763; 33764; 33765;
33766; 33767; 33769; 33770; 33771; 33774; 33775; 33778; 33779; 33785; 33786;
34660; 34677; 34681; 34682; 34683; 34684; 34685; 34688; 34689; 34692; 34695;
34697; 34698.

- b. Cases filed from the following Pinellas County ZIP codes are to be assigned using an equal, at random, blind assignment system to sections 39 and 40 in St. Petersburg so that each section is assigned essentially the same number of new county civil cases. County Small Claims cases filed from the following Pinellas County ZIP codes are to be assigned using an equal, at random, blind assignment system to sections 45 and 46 in St. Petersburg so that each section is assigned essentially the same number of new county small claims cases.

33701; 33702; 33703; 33704; 33705; 33706; 33707; 33708; 33709; 33710; 33711;
33712; 33713; 33714; 33715; 33716; 33729; 33730; 33731; 33732; 33733; 33734;
33736; 33737; 33738; 33740; 33741; 33742; 33743; 33744; 33747; 33772; 33773;
33776; 33777; 33780; 33781; 33782; 33784.

- c. County civil cases from the out of county zip codes 33606 and 33617 are to be assigned using an equal, at random, blind assignment to sections 41 and 42 in Clearwater so that each section is assigned essentially the same number of cases.
- d. Any small claims case in which a pro se plaintiff or counsel has a given address outside of Pinellas County, the Clerk shall assign small claims case to that courthouse in which the first named defendant would have been assigned had that defendant been the plaintiff. Any small claims case in which the defendant is also out-of-county shall be designated an out-of-county case and assigned without regard to the defendant's address.
- e. Unless otherwise provided for in this Administrative Order, other cases with an out of county ZIP code, an unknown ZIP code, or a ZIP code not listed in this Administrative Order are to be assigned in a manner that results in an even distribution of the cases between all county civil sections in both Clearwater and St. Petersburg, and an even distribution of small claims cases in both Clearwater and St. Petersburg. The Administrative Office of the Courts will review the case distribution at least semi-annually and as needed adjust the percentage of such cases that are to be assigned to Clearwater sections and St. Petersburg sections in order to equalize the workload.

5. When a judge has entered an order recusing himself or herself from all cases of a named party or attorney, the Clerk shall:

- a. Reassign all cases from that party or attorney to another judge in the same geographic location and division as the recusing judge unless otherwise directed;
- b. Assign future cases so that cases from that party or attorney are not assigned to the

recused judge; and

- c. Assign future cases so that new cases assigned to division judges in Clearwater remain balanced and new cases assigned to division judges in St. Petersburg remain balanced.
6. When a judge has entered an order of disqualification in an individual case, the Clerk shall:
 - a. Reassign that case to another judge in the same geographic location and division as the disqualified judge unless otherwise directed; and
 - b. Assign future cases so that new cases assigned to division judges in Clearwater remain balanced and new cases assigned to division judges in St. Petersburg remain balanced.
 7. No cases are to be reassigned based upon this Administrative Order.
 8. A motion to re-open a case from a former section that is now closed is to be assigned in accordance with this Administrative Order. A motion to re-open a case from an open section is to be assigned to the former section unless the judge assigned to that section has entered an order of recusal.
 9. The Pinellas Clerk of the Circuit Court and Pinellas County Business Technology Services Department shall take the necessary action to implement this Order. No changes to the Administrative Order or exceptions to the terms of this Administrative Order may be made unless authorized in writing by the Chief Judge.

Administrative Order 2019-075 is hereby rescinded.

DONE AND ORDERED in Chambers at St Petersburg, Pinellas County, Florida this _____ day of August 2020.

ORIGINAL SIGNED ON AUGUST 28, 2020
BY ANTHONY RONDOLINO, CHIEF JUDGE

cc: All Pinellas Judges
The Honorable Bernie McCabe, State Attorney
The Honorable Bob Dillinger, Public Defender
The Honorable Ken Burke, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Pinellas County
Gay Inskeep, Trial Courts Administrator
Ita M. Neymotin, Regional Counsel, Second District
Ngozi Acholonu, Assistant Regional Counsel
Jeff Rohrs, BTS Chief Information Officer, Pinellas Business Technology Services
Tim Staney, Program Manager, Pinellas Business Technology Services
Tonya Rainwater, Justice CCMS Project Sponsor
Bar Associations, Pasco and Pinellas Counties
Law Libraries, Pasco and Pinellas Counties