

**SECOND JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
AMENDMENT TO ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN
(Effective January 1, 2025)**

The previously approved Administrative Plan for the Second Judicial Circuit has been amended. The amended provisions are set forth herein. All provisions of the previously approved administrative plan shall remain in full force and effect except to the extent they conflict with the provisions contained in this amendment.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Second Judicial Circuit of the State of Arkansas consists of six counties and nine courthouses. The six counties are Clay, Craighead, Crittenden, Greene, Mississippi, and Poinsett. Three counties have two county seats: Craighead County with county seats in Jonesboro and Lake City; Clay County with county seats in Corning and Piggott; and Mississippi County with county seats in Blytheville and Osceola. The twelve circuit judges who have been elected/appointed to serve this area are as follows:

Judge Pamela Honeycutt	Division 1
Judge Richard Lusby	Division 2
Judge Chris Thyer	Division 3
Judge Keith Chrestman	Division 4
Judge-Elect Doug Brimhall	Division 4
Judge Charles M. Mooney, Jr.	Division 5
Judge Tonya Alexander	Division 6
Judge Mary Broadway	Division 7
Judge Kimberly Bibb	Division 8
Judge Melissa Richardson	Division 9
Judge Dan Ritchey	Division 10
Judge Randy Philhours	Division 11
Judge Scott Ellington	Division 12

II. ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

Pursuant to Administrative Order No. (AO) 14, Section 3, by a majority vote of the circuit judges of the Second Judicial Circuit, this Plan is adopted for circuit court administration. Its purpose is to facilitate the best use of the available judicial and support resources within the Circuit so that cases will be resolved in an efficient and prompt manner. This Plan, if approved by the Supreme Court, shall take effect on January 1, 2025, and shall be effective until replaced by any subsequently approved plan.

One of the circuit judges shall serve as the Administrative Judge (AJ), who shall carry out the responsibilities outlined in Administrative Order No. 14, Section 2(c). The AJ shall take any and all actions necessary to implement this Plan and the administrative procedures established by the judges of this Circuit. Judge Pamela Honeycutt has been selected to serve as AJ and may continue in that capacity until her successor is elected pursuant to Section 2(b) of Administrative Order No. 14.

III. CASELOAD ESTIMATES

The judges of the Second Judicial Circuit, in developing this plan, relied on caseload statistics prepared by the AOC for the calendar years 2020-2023. The average number of new, non-reopened cases filed over that four-year period is 18,993 per year. Dividing those cases among the twelve circuit judges results in an average number of 1,583 cases per judge. The judges who are assigned dependency-neglect cases will have a reduced number of total cases in recognition of the greater weight assigned to those cases as set forth in Section IV-C below.

In the event this assignment system results in a workload imbalance that adversely affects the judge or the judicial circuit, the AJ shall take steps to correct this imbalance by proposing an amended plan to correct any problem.

IV. CASE ASSIGNMENT AND ALLOCATION

A. DOMESTIC RELATIONS AND PROBATE DIVISIONS

All twelve circuit judges within the Circuit will share a roughly equivalent assignment of Domestic Relations/Probate Chambers Days within the Circuit. However, all new case filings in the Domestic Relations and Probate Divisions of the circuit court of the various counties within the Second Judicial Circuit shall be assigned to the judges in all divisions except for Division 11. Case assignment in the Domestic Relations and Probate Divisions shall be random and in the following percentages:

Judge Pamela Honeycutt	Division 1	2%
Judge Richard Lusby	Division 2	4%
Judge Chris Thyer	Division 3	8%
Judge-Elect Doug Brimhall	Division 4	14%
Judge Charles M. Mooney, Jr.	Division 5	16%
Judge Tonya Alexander	Division 6	9%
Judge Mary Broadaway	Division 7	14%
Judge Kimberly Bibb	Division 8	11%
Judge Melissa Richardson	Division 9	2%
Judge Dan Ritchey	Division 10	13%
Judge Randy Philhours	Division 11	0%
Judge Scott Ellington	Division 12	7%

Reopened Cases. Once a contested Domestic Relations or Probate case has been closed by the Clerk, if the case is re-opened it shall be randomly assigned among the eleven judges and not automatically reassigned to the judge to whom the case was originally assigned. The newly assigned judge and the previously assigned

judge may mutually agree to transfer the case to the previously assigned judge to further judicial economy. This decision is made to account for periodic changes in the Plan and to assure equal division of cases across all twelve divisions as required by AO 14 (3)(a)(1)(ii).

Adult Protective Services Cases. All adult protective services (“APS”) cases within Clay, Craighead, Greene, and Poinsett Counties shall be assigned to the judge in Division 8. All APS cases within Mississippi and Crittenden Counties shall be assigned to the judge in Division 4. These assignments are made for judicial economy to permit prompt and regular judicial review and to avoid unnecessary delay due to the transfer of cases.

B. CIVIL AND CRIMINAL DIVISIONS

The circuit clerks of the respective counties are responsible for the random assignment of civil and criminal cases pursuant to this Plan and AO 14. The manner, process, and procedure for a true and accurate random selection of judges is left to the respective circuit clerks to implement except for the specific provisions to the contrary herein.

In the Eastern District of Clay County, all criminal and civil cases shall be equally assigned to the judges in Divisions 1 and 3. In the Western District of Clay County, all criminal and civil cases shall be equally assigned to the judges in Divisions 5 and 8.

In the Western District of Craighead County, all criminal cases shall be equally assigned to the judges in Divisions 3, 11, and 12. All cases referred to drug court for disposition shall then be reassigned to the judge in Division 9. All civil cases filed in this District shall be equally assigned to the judges in Divisions 1, 2, and 9.

Because of the comparatively small caseload in the Eastern District of Craighead County, and in view of both speedy trial considerations and judicial efficiency, all civil and criminal cases shall be assigned to the judge in Division 10.

In Crittenden County, all criminal cases shall be equally assigned to the judges in Divisions 6, 10, and 11. All cases referred to drug court for disposition shall then be reassigned to the judge in Division 5. All civil cases filed in Crittenden County shall be equally assigned to the judges in Divisions 2, 3, and 4.

In Greene County, all criminal cases shall be equally assigned to the judges in Divisions 1, 9, and 11. All cases referred to drug court for disposition shall be reassigned to the judge in Division 7. All civil cases in Greene County shall be equally assigned to the judges in Divisions 2 and 9.

In the Chickasawba District of Mississippi County, all criminal cases shall be equally assigned to the judges in Divisions 5, 8, and 12. All cases referred to drug court for disposition shall then be reassigned to the judge in Division 10. All civil cases in the Chickasawba District of Mississippi County shall be equally assigned to the judges in Divisions 2 and 5.

In the Osceola District of Mississippi County, all criminal cases shall be equally assigned to the judges in Divisions 6 and 10. All cases referred to drug court for disposition shall then be reassigned to the judge in Division 10. All civil cases filed in the Osceola District of Mississippi County shall be equally assigned to the judges in Divisions 2 and 7.

In Poinsett County, all criminal cases shall be equally assigned to the judges in Divisions 1, 9, and 12. All cases referred to drug court for disposition shall then be reassigned to the judge in Division 5. All civil cases filed in Poinsett County shall be equally assigned to the judges in Divisions 1 and 4.

Reopened Civil Cases. Once a civil case has been closed by the Clerk and subsequently reopened, the case shall be reassigned to the previously assigned judge if such judge still has a civil division assignment in that county or county's district. Otherwise, the case shall be randomly assigned to one of the judges who do have a civil division assignment in that county or county's district. Nothing in this section shall prevent the newly assigned judge and the previously assigned judge from mutually agreeing to transfer the case to the previously assigned judge to further judicial economy.

Specialty Court Transfers. If the State files a petition to impose sentence based on allegations that a defendant has failed to successfully complete a particular specialty court, the presiding specialty court judge shall recuse. The case shall then be reassigned to a judge currently hearing criminal cases in that county or county's district.

Petitions to Revoke or to Impose Sentence. These petitions shall be randomly assigned to the judges currently hearing criminal cases in that county or county's district.

Post-conviction relief. Petitions for post-conviction relief shall be assigned to the judge who presided over the trial, hearing, or event that is the basis of the petition. If the judge who presided over the trial, hearing or event is no longer on the bench, then it shall be randomly assigned to a judge currently hearing criminal cases in that county or county's district.

C. JUVENILE DELINQUENCY, FINS, AND D-N DIVISIONS

Juvenile Delinquency and FINS cases. The judges in Divisions 6, 7, and 8 shall be randomly assigned 33.3% of the Juvenile Delinquency and FINS cases across the Circuit.

Dependency-Neglect (D-N) Cases. The judge in Division 5 shall be assigned all D-N cases in Clay and Poinsett counties. The judge in Division 7 shall be assigned all D-N cases in Greene County. The judge in Division 8 shall be assigned all D-N cases in Craighead County. The judge in Division 4 shall be assigned all D-N cases in Crittenden and Mississippi counties.

In order to equitably distribute the workload among the judges in this Circuit as set forth in Section III herein, each D-N case is counted as a case and one-half for purposes of equal division of cases pursuant to AO 14 (3)(a)(1)(ii) due to the number, type, and length of hearings statutorily required to be held for each such case.

D. ROUTINE AND UNCONTESTED MATTERS

The assignment of circuit judges to a particular division as specified herein shall not preclude any circuit judge from hearing any routine and uncontested matters irrespective of the division assignment. However, motions for continuance and motions to be relieved as counsel shall be heard by the judge to whom the case is assigned.

V. OTHER PROVISIONS

A. Recusals, Exchanges, and Special Judge Assignments. The judges of the Second Judicial Circuit shall follow the procedures for recusals, exchanges and special assignments set forth in AO 16.

B. **Other Circumstances.** Nothing in this Plan shall prohibit another judge within this Circuit from presiding over cases in a division and/or venue to which he or she is not assigned under this Plan on the condition that there is the express consent of the judge to whom the cases are originally assigned, under circumstances including but not limited to the following: 1) to provide relief to an overcrowded docket where the volunteering judge not assigned to the particular division and venue has available time due to cancellation, settlement, or rescheduling of cases, 2) any other extenuating circumstance requiring the just and expeditious disposition of cases with the consent of the volunteering judge and the judge to whom the cases are assigned, or 3) if in the interest of judicial economy where a judge has previously heard a matter involving the same or substantially same litigants and issues.

VI. SPECIALTY COURTS OR PROGRAMS

Craighead County Juvenile Division Drug Court Judge Kimberly Bibb presiding

The Craighead County Juvenile Division Drug Court program has been terminated and is no longer operating.

VII. STATE DISTRICT JUDGES

<p>ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 18 REFERRALS FROM CIRCUIT COURT</p>
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The following circuit court specialty courts are conducted:

Mississippi County Mental Health Court (Project Fresh Start) Judge Tonya Alexander presiding

Upon request of Judge Tonya Alexander and acquiescence by Judge Catherine Dean, Judge Dean may temporarily fill-in for a specialty court session of this program in the Osceola District of the Mississippi County Circuit Court.

A. Type of Program and Description of Operations. Mississippi County Mental Health Court is a voluntary, pre-adjudication, highly intensive supervision program designed to address the needs of criminal defendants with mental illness

or co-occurring disorders. Mental Health Court is available only to defendants meeting program eligibility requirements. The defendant must be an adult resident of Craighead, Mississippi or Crittenden County; must not have a previous conviction for a serious felony involving violence as defined in §5-4-501(c)(2); must not have a previous conviction that would require registration as a sex offender; must be identified as high-risk/high-need, as determined by a validated risk-need assessment; must have a mental health disorder, and must be identified as clinically appropriate for the program, as determined by a licensed therapist. Mental Health Court is a minimum of fourteen (14) months. Mississippi County Mental Health Court is held every Thursday of the month at 3:00 p.m. at the Mississippi County Detention Center courtroom, 685 N. Co. Rd. 599, Luxora, AR.

B. Statutory Authority: Mississippi County Mental Health Court was established pursuant to the Arkansas Code Annotated §16-100-201 through §16-100-209.

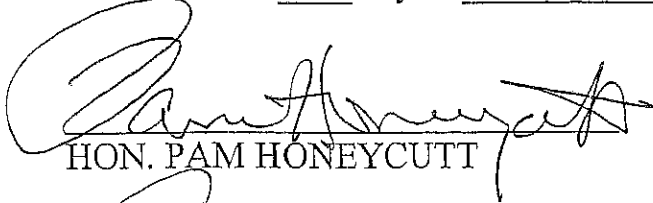
C. Certification of Compliance: Mississippi County Mental Health Court operates in compliance with all applicable sentencing laws, including fines, fees, court costs, and probation assessments. Team members have attended training programs offered by the Administrative Office of the Courts. Mississippi County Mental Health Court was implemented and operates in accordance with best-practice standards.

D. Use of Court Resources: The Mississippi County Mental Health Court team includes (1) full-time Circuit Court Judge, (1) back-up Circuit Court Judge, (1) full-time Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, (1) full-time Deputy Public Defender, (1) Court Coordinator, (1) Probation Officer, (1) Law Enforcement Representative, and (3) Representatives from the community treatment provider, Mid-South Health Systems.

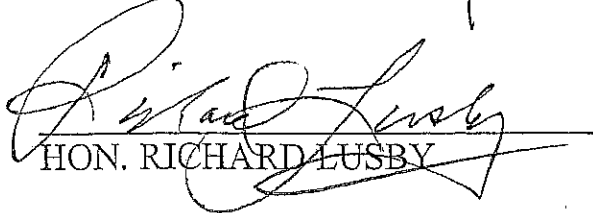
E. Sources of Funding: Mississippi County Mental Health Court receives funding and support from Mississippi County, the Public Defender Commission, the Mississippi County Prosecuting Attorney's Office, the Department of Corrections, the Administrative Office of the Courts, and Federal Providers.

The amendment to the Administrative Plan was adopted by a majority of the circuit judges of the Second Judicial Circuit.

Dated this _____ day of _____, 2024.


HON. PAM HONEYCUTT


HON. MARY BROADWAY


HON. RICHARD LUSBY

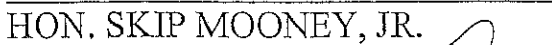

HON. KIMBERLY BIBB


HON. CHRIS THYER

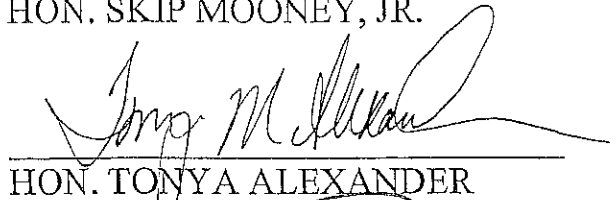

HON. MELISSA RICHARDSON


HON. KEITH CHRESTMAN

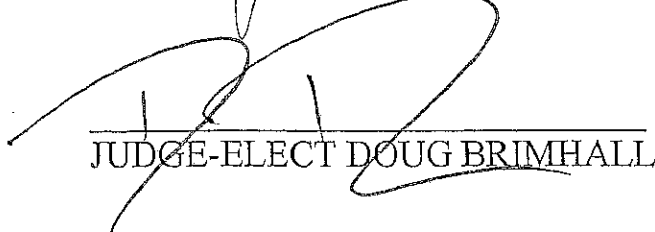

HON. DAN RITCHEY


HON. SKIP MOONEY, JR.


HON. RANDY PHILHOURS


HON. TONYA ALEXANDER


HON. SCOTT ELLINGTON


JUDGE-ELECT DOUG BRIMHALL