

Administrative Plan for the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit of Arkansas

The Fourteenth Judicial Circuit of Arkansas includes the counties of Baxter, Boone, Marion and Newton. The following are the elected circuit judges:

Division 1	Judge Andrew Bailey
Division 2	Judge Deanna “Suzie” Layton
Division 3	Judge John Putman
Division 4	Judge Johnnie Copeland

The circuit judges of the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit set forth the following administrative plan for the purpose set out in Administrative Order 14 of the Arkansas Supreme Court: 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. Unless otherwise set forth herein, case assignments will be made randomly upon filing by the court’s electronic court management system. This plan will take effect on January 1, 2026.

Case Assignment and Allocation

Division 1	20% of domestic relations cases in all counties 100% of criminal cases in Baxter and Marion Counties 20% of civil cases in all counties All adult specialty court cases in all counties
Division 2	100% of juvenile cases in all counties 100% of probate cases in all counties
Division 3	30% of domestic relations cases in all counties 100% of criminal cases in Boone and Newton Counties 30% of civil cases in all counties

Division 4 50% of domestic relations cases in all counties
 50% of civil cases in all counties
 100% of cases in which OCSE is a party in all counties

Every civil case is assigned a case type by the circuit clerk through the court's electronic court management system upon filing. Each type of civil case will be assigned pursuant to the percentages set forth above for equity and in order to accommodate the availability of courtrooms and court staff available for jury trials.

The circuit judges have taken into consideration the average amount of time spent both in and out of the courtroom on the various case types and have determined the allocation of cases to be an equitable distribution. As case filings fluctuate, the judges may confer from time to time to determine whether adjustments need to be made. The estimated caseload for each division, based on the average number of case filings between 2020 and 2024, is as follows:

Division 1	1,400
Division 2	1,200
Division 3	1,300
Division 4	1,400

All matters connected with a pending or supplemental proceeding will be heard by the judge to whom the matter was originally assigned¹. For example, civil forfeitures will be heard by the judge handling the associated criminal case, if applicable, and orders of protection will be heard by the judge handling an associated domestic relations or probate matter. In circumstances where a criminal defendant has multiple successive filings, upon the circuit clerk's consultation with the administrative judge, those cases may be assigned to the judge with the case that is opened first.

¹ This provision does not apply to domestic relations cases in which there is also a pending adoption proceeding involving the same child or children, unless agreed upon by the judges.

A case that is reopened will be assigned to the judge originally hearing the case, except that cases in which OCSE reopens to intervene will be assigned to Division 4.

A judge may request another circuit judge in the circuit to preside over their cases if they are temporarily unavailable.

The assignment of special judges is governed by Administrative Order 16. When a special judge is assigned to hear a case in the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit, the court staff of the first judge to recuse will assist the special judge with scheduling and securing a courtroom and a court reporter. The circuit clerk will assign the case appropriately in the electronic filing system so that court staff will receive electronic filings for the case.

Specialty Court Program

The Fourteenth Judicial Circuit Adult Drug Court Program is overseen by Judge Andrew Bailey. It was created and operates pursuant to the requirements of the Arkansas Drug Court Act (A.C.A. §16-98-301 et seq). It is a treatment court for those struggling with substance use disorders. The court is a post-adjudication specialty court that typically takes participants 14-18 months to complete its five phases. Treatment court sessions take place in Mountain Home and in Harrison, but participants may live in any county within the circuit.

The program's use of court resources includes a treatment team comprised of a circuit judge, a prosecuting attorney, a defense attorney, a probation officer, a counselor, and an administrative assistant, all of which are provided by the State of Arkansas. Law enforcement liaisons are provided by various local law enforcement agencies.

The Fourteenth Judicial Circuit Adult Drug Court Program is funded by the State of Arkansas, the four counties it serves, and by federal grant funds.

The circuit judges certify that the program conforms to all applicable sentencing laws, including fines, fees, court costs, and probation assessments.

State District Court Judges

The Fourteenth Judicial Circuit is also home to two state district courts. Judge Jodi Carney presides over the Tenth State District Court, which contains Baxter County and Marion County, and Judge Wes Bradford presides over the Fourth State District Court, which includes Boone County and Newton County. The proposed administrative plans for these courts, effective January 1, 2026, are attached hereto.

Pursuant to Administrative Order 18, the circuit judges, with the consent of the state court district judges, refer to the state court district judges:

1. Matters filed in the civil, domestic relations or probate divisions of circuit court upon the referral of a circuit court judge.
2. The issuance of search warrants pursuant to Rule 13.1.
3. The issuance of arrest warrants pursuant to Rule 7.1 or Ark. Code Ann. §16-81-104, or the issuance of a summons pursuant to Rule 6.1.
4. Reasonable cause determinations pursuant to Rule 4.1(e).
5. First appearances pursuant to Rule 8.1, at which the judge may appoint counsel pursuant to Rule 8.2, inform a defendant pursuant to Rule 8.3, accept a plea of “not guilty” or “not guilty by reason of insanity,” conduct a pretrial release inquiry pursuant to Rules 8.4 and 8.5, or release a defendant from custody pursuant to Rules 9.1, 9.2, and 9.3.
6. Matters of an emergency or uncontested nature pending in the civil or domestic relations divisions of the circuit court.
7. Matters of an emergency or uncontested nature in the probate division of the circuit court, with the exception of adoptions.

Except with regard to 8.1 and consent jurisdiction proceedings, it is not the intent of the circuit judges to refer all of the listed matters to the state district judges. The state district judges may take up the other types of matters upon specific referral from a circuit judge, when appropriate.

Upon implementation of this administrative plan, the state district courts will have the ability to make a verbatim record as required by Administrative Order 4.

The judges of the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit of Arkansas submit that the above is an administrative plan that will best facilitate the aims of Administrative Order 14.

Respectfully submitted this 2nd day of June, 2025.

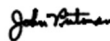


Hon. Andrew Bailey, Division 1



[Deanna "Suzie" Layton \(May 29, 2025 12:13 CDT\)](#)

Hon. Deanna "Suzie" Layton, Division 2



[John Putman \(Jun 2, 2025 07:18 CDT\)](#)

Hon. John Putman, Division 3



[Johnnie Copeland \(May 29, 2025 14:45 CDT\)](#)

Hon. Johnnie Copeland, Division 4