

**Administrative Plan
for
Ninth East (9-E) Judicial Circuit**

Effective January 1, 2026

Pursuant to Administrative Order No. 14, the following Administrative Plan is submitted to the Arkansas Supreme Court. The Ninth East Judicial Circuit is composed of Clark County, Arkansas and is served by one Circuit Judge, Blake Batson, and one full-time State District Judge, Randy Hill.

I. CASE ASSIGNMENT AND ALLOCATION

The Ninth East Circuit is a one-judge circuit. The Circuit Judge will hear all cases in all five divisions: criminal, civil, domestic relations, probate and juvenile. The estimated caseload follows: 250 criminal cases, 225 civil cases, 225 domestic relations cases, 175 probate cases, and 125 juvenile cases.

II. ENHANCED JURY LIST

- Yes
- No

After careful consideration, the Ninth-East Circuit determined the use of registered voters creates a sufficient pool for the selection of jurors to offer an adequate cross section of the community and declines the use of the enhanced jury list pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. §16-32-303.

III. SPECIALTY COURTS

| <u>Type of Specialty Court</u> | <u>Location</u> |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Drug Court | Clark County |

A. **Description of Program and How it Operates.** Judge Randy Hill presides over the circuit court drug court concurrently with Judge Blake Batson. Felony Drug Court meets the 1st & 3rd Thursday of each month. The 9th East Judicial District Drug Court (DC) is a pre-adjudication program that serves offenders, minimum and medium risk

defendants, excluding violent offenders and sex offenders. The 9th East Drug Court program is a four-phase 12 month drug treatment program with after care up to 18 months. Participants' treatment needs are assessed by the treatment staff, upon referral to the program and throughout the program based on the changing circumstances and compliance with court orders. Incentives and sanctions are issued by the judge based upon the participant's program compliance through the treatment phases. Intensive supervision is provided by DCC probation staff. Participants receive at least monthly court reviews. The Drug Court Coordinator or his/her designee enters data on performance measures on each drug court participant into SCALES.

B. **Statutory or Legal Authority.** A.C.A. §16-98-301 et seq.

C. **Certification.** The program conforms to all applicable sentencing laws, including fines, fees, court costs, and probation assessment.

D. **Description of the Program's Use of Court Resources.** The Drug Court Team consists of Circuit Judge Blake Batson, State District Judge Randy Hill, Deputy Prosecutor Gina White, Public Defender Clint Mathis, ACC Probation Officer, ACC Substance Abuse Counselor Marla Hammond and Drug Court Coordinator Penny Ross. JDC Team members participate in staffings and in hearings to ensure that all available resources are used in a timely manner to meet a participant's individualized needs. Treatment is provided by DCC Staff and other available treatment providers.

E. **Source of Funding.** Department of Community Corrections and monies allocated to this budget from fees paid by participants of the program.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 18 REFERRALS FROM CIRCUIT COURT.

Has the circuit court referred matters pursuant to Administrative Order No. 18 to be heard by a state district judge?

Yes

No

Participating State District Judges ----- Assignment and Allocation of Cases

The state district judge participating in referrals from the circuit court includes:

| <u>Name</u> | <u>District Court Judicial District</u> | <u>Assignment and Allocation of Cases</u> |
|------------------|---|---|
| Judge Randy Hill | 40 th District | 100% of Referrals to State District Judge |

*These matters will only be referred to Judge Hill when Judge Batson is unavailable.

Matters Subject to Reference

The following matters are referred from circuit court to state district court and have been included in the administrative plan for the circuit court and the administrative plan for the district court:

Consent Jurisdiction. Upon the consent of all parties and approval by the circuit judge originally assigned, the following types of cases are referred from circuit court:

- Civil
- Domestic Relations
- Probate

*Consent jurisdiction will be utilized by agreement and if Judge Batson is unavailable.

Protective Orders.

Forcible Entry and Detainers / Unlawful Detainer.

Other Matters of an Emergency or Uncontested Nature Pending in Civil, Domestic Relations or Probate Division. *Please provide detailed information regarding the types of matters that will be referred and where these matters will be heard below.*

Type of Other Matters _____ Location _____

Request for Ex Parte Mental Commitment

Clark County Circuit Courtroom or
Clark County District Courtroom –
Arkadelphia Department

Pro Se Uncontested Divorces

Clark County Circuit Courtroom or
Clark County District Courtroom –
Arkadelphia Department

Request for Ex Parte Drug / Alcohol Commitment

Clark County Circuit Courtroom or
Clark County District Courtroom –
Arkadelphia Department

*These matters will be referred by agreement to Judge Hill and when Judge Batson is unavailable.

Other Matters, if Justification for the Reference and Procedures to be Employed are Sufficiently Demonstrated in the Circuit Court Administration Plan Pursuant to Administrative Order No. 14. *Please provide detailed information regarding the types of matters that will be referred and where these matters will be heard below.*

Type of Other Matters

Location

Not Applicable

Criminal. The following duties are referred with respect to an investigation or prosecution of an offense lying within the exclusive jurisdiction of the circuit court on an as needed basis:

- Issue Search Warrant Pursuant to Rule 13.1
- Issue Arrest Warrant Pursuant to Rule 7.1 or A.C.A. §16-81-104
- Issue Summons Pursuant to Rule 6.1
- Reasonable Cause Determinations Pursuant to Rule 4.1 (e)
- Conduct First Appearance Pursuant to Rule 8.1
- Appoint Counsel Pursuant to Rule 8.2
- Inform Defendant Pursuant to Rule 8.3
- Accept Plea of “Not Guilty” or “Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity”
- Conduct Pretrial Release Inquiry Rules 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3
- Conduct Preliminary Hearing Pursuant to A.C.A. §16-93-307

Other criminal matters may be referred including authority to sign miscellaneous criminal orders of a non-adversarial nature. Examples of such non-adversarial orders include, but are not limited to, orders involving the conversion of fines, fees, and court costs to community service, and orders applying funds received from the Great Arkansas Treasure Hunt to fines, fees, court costs, and restitution.

Digital Audio Recording Equipment

Is digital audio recording equipment utilized to make a verbatim record of matters referred from the circuit court?

- Yes
- No

District Court Administrative Plans

The following district court administrative plans are appended for submission to the supreme court:

- 40th District – Clark County

Circuit Court Specialty Court Dockets or Programs

Does a district court judge preside over a circuit court specialty court program?

- Yes
 No

*Judge Randy Hill presides over the circuit court drug court concurrently with Judge Blake Batson.


The following circuit court specialty courts are conducted: Drug Court

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- B. **Statutory or Legal Authority.** A.C.A. §16-98-301 et seq.
- C. **Certification.** The program conforms to all applicable sentencing laws, including fines, fees, court costs, and probation assessment.
- D. **Description of the Program's Use of Court Resources.** The Drug Court Team consists of Circuit Judge Blake Batson, State District Judge Randy Hill, Deputy Prosecutor Gina White, Public Defender Janice Williams, ACC Probation Officer, ACC Substance Abuse Counselor Carla Nutt and Drug Court Coordinator Penny Ross. JDC Team members participate in staffings and in hearings to ensure that all available resources are used in a timely manner to meet a participants individualized needs. Treatment is provided by DCC Staff and other available treatment providers.
- E. **Source of Funding.** Department of Community Corrections and monies allocated to this budget from fees paid by participants of the program.

V. Approval

The State District Judge has agreed to the referrals of circuit court matters as set forth in this Administrative Plan.



Blake Batson, Circuit Judge



Randy Hill, State District Judge