

**Sixth Judicial Circuit
Case Assignment Plan, Effective January 1, 2020**

1. **Goal of the Plan:** Pursuant to Administrative Order Number 14, as amended, the judges of the Sixth Judicial Circuit have agreed to a Case Assignment Plan that will maximize the resources of Pulaski and Perry Counties while equitably dividing the caseload among the seventeen (17) circuit judges. The Plan takes into consideration various factors, including, but not limited to the current caseload assignment, the location of the facilities, the number of courtrooms suitable for jury trials, and the desire of each individual judge regarding case assignment. Because of six (6) new circuit judges being elected and sworn into office on January 1, 2021, this Plan represents a case assignment plan for both calendar years 2020 and 2021.

By presenting this Plan to the Arkansas Supreme Court, the judges of the Sixth Judicial Circuit recognize that the Plan is a compromise of many factors and that the ultimate goal is to serve best the citizens of Pulaski and Perry Counties. Changes in the Plan may be made depending on changed circumstances during the effective term of the Plan. Any change will be presented for approval of the Arkansas Supreme Court before implementation.

2. **Effective Dates:** This Plan shall be enacted for the period between January 1, 2020 and December 31, 2021. The Plan shall remain in effect during that period unless otherwise modified, and shall continue until the Arkansas Supreme Court has approved another Plan.

3. **Voting:** Pursuant to the Per Curiam Opinion delivered January 30, 2003, a majority of the circuit judges in the judicial district shall be sufficient to adopt a plan. In the Sixth Judicial Circuit, there are seventeen (17) circuit judges; therefore, nine (9) votes are required to adopt a plan, and any modifications thereafter.

4. **Administrative Plan:** All cases are to be apportioned among the circuit judges as equally as possible by random selection, and cases may be reassigned as necessity requires. A circuit judge to whom a case is assigned shall accept that case unless he or she is disqualified or the interests of justice require that the case not be heard by that judge.

Pulaski County Caseload Plan:

- a. Pulaski County Average Caseload. Using year end 2018 case filing figures, the total number of cases filed in Pulaski County was 22,707, an increase of 3,191 cases above the figures used in the 2016 Plan. Judge James has 63 active Drug Court and Veteran's cases, with 399 active warrants. A total of 43 cases have closed due to graduation, etc. The caseload of each circuit judge, if divided equally between the seventeen (17) judges, would be approximately 1,335 for calendar year

2020. The circuit judges acknowledge that since the juvenile courtrooms are located separate from the Pulaski County Courthouse, the logistics require a deviation from the concept of equal case filings for each judge. In that regard, the Plan proposes that of the three (3) circuit judges currently hearing juvenile cases, Judge James hears Drug Court and Veteran's Court cases and still maintains a caseload of juvenile related cases. It is anticipated that filings for both Drug Court and Veteran's Court will dramatically increase at that time. Judges Warren and Branton will continue hearing a full juvenile caseload plus the truancy cases that would normally be assigned to Judge James. The judges will continue the pre-diversion program in juvenile court and have the responsibility of monitoring the participants. All three (3) judges will also participate in the rotation for hearing mental health cases. Judge McGowan no longer hears Drug Court and Veteran's Court cases except for motions for expungement of the cases she has heard in the past. All remaining Drug Court and Veteran's Court cases have been transferred to Judge James.

Beginning in 2021, unless the case filing numbers substantially increase, only two (2) circuit judges (Divisions 8 and 10) will be assigned to hear juvenile matters. Judge Patti James (Division 11), beginning January 1, 2021 will move her chambers to the Pulaski County Courthouse and no longer hear juvenile cases. Judge James' juvenile cases, including closed and current juvenile cases, will be evenly divided and assigned to Divisions 8 and 10. Those Divisions will continue to hear all juvenile cases.

The juvenile probation and intake officers currently under the supervision of Judge James will, on December 31, 2020, transfer to Divisions 8 and 10 equally. The new circuit judges for Divisions 8 and 10 sworn into office on January 1, 2021 will then have the control and supervision of these juvenile probation and intake officers as well as those currently assigned to Division 11. The juvenile probation and intake officers shall serve at the pleasure of the circuit judges.

The Circuit Judges have obtained case filings as of May 2019 from the Pulaski Circuit Clerk that indicate, if the trend of current filings continue, that year end 2019 filings will increase substantially over year end 2018 filings. At the end of May 2019, the filings are as follows: criminal-2689; civil-3841; domestic-2511; probate-1309 and juvenile-905. In addition, DF&A is filing large numbers of Certificates of Indebtedness that are filed as civil cases, which could inflate the civil case filings by 1400-1800 per year. These new filings are not included in this Case Assignment Plan, but if the trend continues, an Amended Case Assignment Plan may be submitted for consideration at the end of 2019 or early 2020.

- b. The Circuit Judges and the eight (8) State District Judges, as of January 1, 2020, have agreed that pursuant to Administrative Orders 14 and 18, the State District Judges will hear a category, or categories, of cases referred to them by the circuit court as will be described in more detail below. It is estimated that approximately 1800 to 2400 hearings are set each year for the State District Judges but with hearings canceled for lack of service or the entry of agreed orders, the actual number of hearings held is substantially less. The Circuit Judge continues to have jurisdiction of the case for other issues.

The judges of the 6th Judicial Circuit have noticed a trend since 2008 of the numbers of cases filed and the increase/decrease of filings in certain subject matters. As a result of these trends, it is necessary for the judges to monitor the filings periodically to ensure that each judge is receiving a fair and proportionate number of cases each year.

- c. Breakdown of Subject-Matter Divisions:

Case Type:	Number of Cases:
	<u>Using Year End 2018 figures</u>
Criminal	4922
Civil	8806
Domestic	4769
Juvenile	1573
Probate	2637
TOTAL	22707

- d. **For calendar year 2020**, these judges will hear the following type cases in Pulaski County:

1. Warren, Branton and James will share in the juvenile caseload.
2. Johnson, Wright, Griffen, Piazza and Sims will share in the criminal caseload; pursuant to the Per Curiam Opinion delivered by the Supreme Court of Arkansas on April 17, 2017, Judge Griffen in Fifth Division Circuit, will not hear, or be assigned, cases that involve the death penalty or the state's execution protocol, whether civil or criminal.
3. Piazza, Griffen, Fox, Gray, Pierce, Welch, Wright and McGowan will share in the civil caseload; pursuant to the Per Curiam Opinion delivered by the Supreme Court of Arkansas on April 17, 2017, Judge Griffen in Fifth Division Circuit, will not hear, or be assigned, cases that involve the death penalty or the state's execution protocol, whether civil or criminal.
4. Compton, Reif, Smith, Moore, and Welch will share in the domestic relations caseload.

5. Compton, Reif, Smith, Moore, and Welch, will share in the probate caseload including case distribution at Mental Health Court; in addition, Johnson, Piazza, James, Wright, Warren, Pierce, Branton and McGowan will participate in the rotation of hearings at Mental Health Court.
 6. Judge James will hear Drug Court and Veteran's Court cases, with the exception of motions for expungement for Drug Court and Veteran's Court cases previously heard by Judge McGowan.
- e. The division of cases is listed below. The numbers of cases listed are approximations because the filings will vary from year to year.

Div.	Judge	Percentage (No. of cases)	Total
1 st	Johnson	30% criminal (1509)	1509
2 nd	Piazza	10% criminal (492); 11.5% civil (1012)	1504
3 rd	Compton	21.25% domestic (1013); 1/5 probate (527)	1540
4 th	Wright	20% criminal (984); 6% civil (528)	1512
5 th	Griffen	10% criminal (492); 11.5% civil (1012)	1504
6 th	Fox	17% civil (1497)	1497
7 th	Sims	30% criminal (1509)	1509
8 th	Branton	33.3% delinquency, Fins, DHS	587*
9 th	McGowan	17% civil (1497)	1497
10 th	Warren	33.3% delinq, Fins, DHS	587*
11 th	James	33.3% delinq, Fins, DHS, Drug and Veterans Court	400*
12 th	Gray	17% civil (1497)	1497
13 th	Reif	21.25% domestic (1013); 1/5 probate (527)	1540
14 th	Smith	21.25% domestic (1013); 1/5 probate (527)	1540
15 th	Moore	21.25% domestic (1013); 1/5 probate (527)	1540
16 th	Welch	3% civil (264); 15% domestic (715); 1/5 probate (527)	1506
17 th	Pierce	17% civil (1497)	1497

*The three (3) judges hearing juvenile cases will also make the following adjustments: of the truancy cases assigned to Judge James, Judges Warren and Branton will hear those cases (approximately 78 each per year). In addition, the above figures do not represent the informal diversion cases (currently 109 youth are participating) to which the judges are responsible.

f. For calendar year 2021, these judges will hear the following type cases in Pulaski County:

1. The new circuit judges elected to 8th and 10th Divisions will share in the juvenile caseload.

2. Johnson, Griffen, Sims and Compton will share in the criminal caseload; pursuant to the Per Curiam Opinion delivered by the Arkansas Supreme Court on April 17, 2017, Judge Griffen in the Fifth Division Circuit, will not hear, or be assigned, cases that involve the death penalty or the state's execution protocol, whether civil or criminal.
3. Griffen, Fox, Gray, Pierce, Wright, Welch and James will share in the civil caseload.
4. Reif, James and the new circuit judges elected to 2nd, 9th, 14th and 15th Divisions will share in the domestic relations caseload.
5. Reif and the new circuit judges elected to 2nd, 9th, 14th and 15th divisions will share in the probate caseload including the case distribution at Mental Health Court; in addition, Johnson, James, Wright, Pierce and the new circuit judges elected in 8th, 9th and 10th Divisions will participate in the rotation of hearings at Mental Health Court.

g. The division of cases is listed below. The numbers of cases listed are approximations because the filings will vary from year to year.

Div.	Judge	Percentage (No. of cases)	Total
1 st	Johnson	29% criminal (1427)	1427
2 nd	new judge	18.8% dom (897); 20% prob (527)	1424
3 rd	Compton	29% criminal (1427)	1427
4 th	Wright	16% civil (1409)	1409
5 th	Griffen	13% criminal (639); 9% civil (792)	1431
6 th	Fox	16% civil (1409)	1409
7 th	Sims	29% criminal (1427)	1427
8 th	new judge	50% juvenile (786)	786
9 th	new judge	18.8% dom (897); 20% prob (527)	1424
10 th	new judge	50% juvenile (786)	786
11 th	James	Drug Ct (150); 11% civil (969); 6% dom (286)	1405
12 th	Gray	16% civil (1409)	1409
13 th	Reif	18.8% dom (897); 20% prob (527)	1424
14 th	new judge	18.8% dom (897); 20% prob (527)	1424
15 th	new judge	18.8% dom (897); 20% prob (527)	1424
16 th	Welch	16% civil (1409)	1409
17 th	Pierce	16% civil (1409)	1409

This Plan is made with the specific understanding that pursuant to Administrative Order No. 14, a new plan will have to be submitted to the Arkansas Supreme Court after each election. The judges agree that this Plan will not create a precedent as to how cases are assigned in the future. The judges also recognize that it is likely that the number of cases in each subject matter may increase or decrease over the next year or two and that modifications may be required.

h. Use of Courtrooms and Jury Pools. Since not all judges have courtrooms that are suitable for jury trials, those judges lacking such a courtroom shall contact a circuit judge who does have a courtroom suitable for a jury trial. The judges shall coordinate the setting of jury trials, the sharing of jury pools, and resolve any other issues that arise that will facilitate the setting of jury trials. A request for a jury trial by one of the judges will take precedence over any non-jury matter for that particular day. Any judge hearing juvenile cases and in need of courtroom facilities for a jury trial shall contact any of the judges at the Pulaski County Courthouse to arrange for the use of their courtroom and jury pool. The courtrooms of Judge Chip Welch, Judge Mackie Pierce and Judge Alice Gray on the 3rd floor of the Pulaski County Courthouse are available for jury trials.

Perry County Caseload Plan:

a. In 2018, there were a total of 341 cases filed in Perry County:

Criminal	73
Civil	109
Domestic	93
Juvenile	11
Probate	55

b. The Circuit Clerk of Perry County will assign each new case to one of the seventeen (17) circuit judges so as to assure that each judge will have substantially the same number of cases as other judges hearing the same case type to which they are assigned. The assigned judge is responsible for the case file; however, by agreement of the circuit judges, nothing shall preclude any other circuit judge from hearing any and all routine and uncontested matters irrespective to which judge the case is assigned.

c. The circuit judges hearing criminal cases in Perry County in calendar year 2020 will each have a pre-trial day and then a trial day approximately two (2) weeks later, if necessary. Judges Johnson, Griffen, Piazza, Wright and Sims will hear criminal cases in Perry County on a rotating basis. In calendar year 2021, the following circuit judges will hear criminal cases in Perry County: Judges Johnson, Griffen, Compton and Sims.

d. Those circuit judges hearing civil, domestic and probate cases in Perry County in 2020 will be Judges Gray, Griffen, Fox, Pierce, Compton, Welch, McGowan, Reif, Moore and Smith. In 2021, the judges will be Judges Gray, Griffen, Fox, Pierce, Welch, James, Reif, Wright and Compton and the judges elected to 2nd, 9th, 14th and 15th Divisions.

- e. Pursuant to the Per Curiam Opinion delivered by the Supreme Court of Arkansas on April 17, 2017, Judge Griffen shall not hear, or be assigned, cases that involve the death penalty or the state's execution protocol, whether civil or criminal.
- f. Those circuit judges hearing juvenile cases in Perry County in 2020 will be Judges Warren, Branton and James. In 2021, the judges elected to 8th and 10th Divisions will hear juvenile cases in Perry County.

5. **Drug Court and Veterans' Treatment Court:** The Sixth Judicial Circuit's Drug Court program has been in operation since 1994; the Veteran's Court has been in operation since December 2011. Judge James presides over all Drug Court and Veteran's Court cases with the exception of any expungement requests of cases that were heard by Judge McGowan, which will be heard by her. The program is a post adjudication process and has been since early 1998. Prior to that time, it was a pre-adjudication process.

6. In drug court, the defendant must elect to enter the Drug Court program as he/she gives up his/her right to a jury trial as he/she must plead guilty. The prosecutor then has the ability to object. However, the program is wide open as to the offenses charged. The program operates in conformity with all criminal statutes and the rules of criminal procedure. No fees are paid to the Court. Arkansas Community Corrections (ACC) provides counselors and probation officers. All probation fees are paid to the ACC. All court costs and fines are paid to the Pulaski County Clerk's office in conformity with the statutes regarding all criminal fines and court costs.

7. The Sixth Judicial Circuit's Prosecuting Attorney has assigned a deputy prosecuting attorney to staff Drug Court and Veterans' Treatment Court (VTC). The Public Defender of the Sixth Judicial Circuit has assigned one deputy public defender to staff these respective courts. These attorneys as well as the private defense bar appear in Drug Court and Veterans' Treatment Court. ACC employs both counselors and probation officers.

The Veteran's Treatment Court is patterned after the Drug Court. It has been in operation in the Sixth Judicial Circuit since December 2011. It is a post adjudication court. There are two differences between VTC and Drug Court: (1) VTC is only available to qualified veterans who have criminal charges, and (2) the veterans can suffer from mental illness issues and/or substance abuse. The defendant is eligible with either diagnosis or both. The Veterans Administration employs a VTC liaison who determines if the defendant is an eligible veteran. Then the same process takes place with the defendant initiating the movement to VTC and the prosecuting attorney agreeing to it. VTC adheres to all criminal statutes and the rules of criminal procedure. ACC provides probation officers. The probation fees go directly to ACC. All court costs and fines are paid to the Pulaski County Clerk's office. The VA provides counseling for substance abuse and/or mental illness, residential treatment, housing assistance and eligible benefits assistance. The

same deputy public defenders that staff Drug Court also staff VTC. Private defense counsel also represent defendants in VTC.

There is no funding for either of these courts. Each respective entity—the Court, its staff, the VA, the ACC, the prosecuting attorney and the public defender are not paid any additional money for operating either Court.

8. Pulaski County Safe Babies Court (ZERO TO THREE): This project has been implemented by Judge Joyce Warren in the 10th Division Circuit Court. The Pulaski County Safe Babies Court (ZERO TO THREE) began in 2010 as the Arkansas Safe Babies Pilot Court. Judge Warren was, and still is, the judge who presides over this docket. Beginning on January 1, 2021, the new 10th Division circuit judge will be responsible for this Court. The Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and Division of Childcare and Early Childhood Education (DCCECE) of the Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) asked ZERO TO THREE to bring the Safe Babies Court Team Project to Arkansas, and a Deputy Director of DHS asked Judge Warren to be the judge of the pilot court.

The Pulaski County Safe Babies Court operates under the auspices of ZERO TO THREE, a national organization with a significant track record in turning the science of early development into helpful resources, practical tools, and responsive policies for parents, professionals, and policymakers. The Safe Babies Court is a systems-change initiative focused on improving how the court, DHS (the child welfare agency), and related child-serving organizations work together, share information, and expedite services for young children in the child welfare system. The goals of Safe Babies Court Team are: (1) to increase knowledge about the negative impact of abuse and neglect on very young children; and (2) change local systems to improve outcomes and prevent future court involvement in the lives of very young children.

The Safe Babies Court has a Community Coordinator position funded by ZERO TO THREE. This individual's focus is to locate persons and programs in the community that can provide appropriate services to the children and families to meet the developmental needs of infants and toddlers in foster care.

The Pulaski County Safe Babies Court focuses on infants from birth to three (3) who are adjudicated dependent-neglected and remain in DHS' custody. When the Judge signs an Ex Parte Order for Emergency Custody and Dependency-Neglect removing a child within that age group from the legal custody of a parent, guardian, or custodian, the Trial Court Administrator notifies the Pulaski County Community Coordinator for the Safe Babies Court Team (SBCT) and the CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) Office of the date and time of the probable cause hearing. The Community Coordinator and a CASA supervisor attend the probable cause hearing. After that hearing and before the adjudication hearing, the Community Coordinator gives the parents information about the ZERO TO THREE Safe Babies Court so the parents can make an informed decision about whether they want to participate--if the Court designates the case as ZERO TO THREE—because parents' participation is entirely voluntary. If the child is adjudicated

dependent-neglected, the parent(s)' attorney, attorney *ad litem*, DHS attorney, and Community Coordinator give the Court a recommendation about whether the case should be a ZERO TO THREE case. Judge Warren has the final decision.

Safe Babies Court holds hearings every six (6) weeks, which is more frequent than other DHS cases; the children and parents have more frequent visitations-- [three (3) hours each week for two (2) hours each visit) with some visits held at places other than the DHS offices]. Other services to the family include specialized parenting classes, visit coaches, child-parent psychotherapy, and other trauma-focused services. The Court refers to and calendars these cases as ZERO TO THREE cases. Each case has a CASA assigned. A family team meeting, facilitated by a certified mediator who is the UALR Mediation Program Coordinator, is held every five (5) weeks to address the progress, problem-solve, and prepare a report for the upcoming court hearing. The Court sets aside a Wednesday and Thursday every six (6) weeks for the ZERO TO THREE hearings.

9. Meetings for Judges: The Administrative Judge shall establish regular meetings for all circuit judges of at least quarterly, or more or less often, as is necessary. If at least three (3) circuit judges request a special meeting, the Administrative Judge shall promptly call a meeting for all circuit judges.

10. Election of Administrative Judge: An election for Administrative Judge was held in February, 2018. Judge Vann Smith was elected Administrative Judge by secret ballot by a vote of 15-0 vote. Judge Smith will serve as the Administrative Judge until such time as the next election is required to be conducted in accordance with Administrative Order No. 14.

11. Reassignment of subject matter: The issue of burn-out was first raised by the Arkansas Supreme Court in a per curiam opinion several years ago. The Court recognized that a judge assigned to a particular subject matter may, in time, request an assignment to hear other type subject matters of cases other than those currently assigned to that judge.

As is true in the current Case Assignment Plan for 2020, several judges have requested a different mix of cases such as an increase in civil cases, a decrease in domestic relations cases and a request to not hear criminal cases. Amendment 80 gives the judicial circuits the luxury of modifying its case assignment plans to accommodate these requests.

Because of the configuration of having a main courthouse housing fourteen (14) judges in the downtown Little Rock area and a juvenile courthouse housing currently three (3) judges on Roosevelt Road in Little Rock hearing exclusively juvenile matters, it is difficult to conveniently modify the case assignment plan to accommodate a desire of one or more of the judges hearing juvenile matters to hear other type cases. It is anticipated that as of 2021, only two (2) circuit judges will hear juvenile matters and that a fifteenth circuit judge will be housed in the Pulaski County Courthouse.

To remedy the situation and to address the issue of burn-out of all judges, as a vacancy occurs in one or more of the seventeen (17) divisions of circuit court, the use of seniority will be utilized to allow a sitting circuit judge to relocate his/her division of court into the facilities of the vacant judicial division and to assume all or part of the case type currently assigned that division as long as it is consistent with the current Case Assignment Plan. The most senior judge would have the first option to elect to fill the vacancy. The next senior judge would then have the option to relocate, and so on. All subsequent vacancies created by this relocation would then be filled in a like manner using seniority. No sitting judge could be removed from his/her existing caseload or chambers using this process. No judge would change division designation or vacate the sub-district designation assigned to that particular division of court because they elected to relocate to another courtroom and chambers space.

A “vacancy” occurs when a sitting circuit judge leaves the bench because of retirement, removal, death or loss of re-election and the vacancy is filled by election. A “vacancy” does not occur when the Governor appoints a person to fill the vacant judicial position.

[By way of example only, if 14th Division Circuit Court becomes vacant because of resignation, removal or death of the sitting judge and if the Governor appoints a person to fill 14th Division, there would not be a vacancy which would allow a sitting judge to move to the courtroom and chambers of 14th Division at that time because the vacancy would be filled by appointment. If, however, an election occurs to fill 14th Division, a sitting judge could decide to move his/her division of court to 14th Division using seniority. If the 7th Division Circuit Judge elects to relocate to the 14th Division courtroom and chambers, then the 7th Division Circuit Judge will remain 7th Division as that is the division of court to which he/she was elected. The 7th Division Circuit Judge would simply move to the new courtroom facilities. The 14th Division would then relocate to another courtroom and chambers in the Pulaski County Courthouse or to the Juvenile Court Building on Roosevelt Road, Little Rock, Arkansas based on seniority.]

If more than one judge wants to relocate after an election has occurred, the use of seniority will dictate the order in which the relocation process shall take place.

The relocating judge must make the decision to relocate to the vacancy by notifying the administrative judge and the newly elected judge at least thirty (30) days after the general election for judges in either the spring election, special election or in November, depending on whether there is a run-off or not for that judgeship.

Effective January 1, 2021, Judge Compton has elected to move her chambers to Room 230 (currently occupied by Judge Piazza). Judge James has elected to move her chambers to Room 320 (currently occupied by Judge McGowan). The new judge elected to 2nd Division will occupy the chambers in Room 320 (currently occupied by Judge Compton on the 3rd floor of the courthouse). The new judge elected to 9th Division will have the chambers in Room 202 (currently used by the District Court Judges) on the 2nd floor of the courthouse. The District Court Judges will relocate to the chambers vacated by Judge James.

12. Recusal Policy: The Arkansas Supreme Court has directed the circuit courts to develop a recusal policy and place it in the Case Assignment Plan. The recusal policy for Pulaski and Perry Counties shall be as follows:

- a. If a judge decides to recuse on a case assigned to that judge, the judge shall enter an order to that effect and shall direct the circuit clerk to randomly reassign the case to another judge who hears that subject matter. If all the judges hearing that particular subject matter recuse, then the clerk shall randomly assign the case to the remaining judges until a judge decides to hear the case, or all judges recuse, in which case the clerk shall notify the administrative judge who will then contact the Chief Justice of the Arkansas Supreme Court for assignment to another judge.
- b. The recusing judge is to immediately notify the new judge of the assignment and also the attorneys or litigants, if pro se, of the recusal and reassignment.
- c. No reason for the recusal is required if the Order of Recusal is filed within six (6) months from the date the recusing judge is assigned the case. If the Order of Recusal is filed after six (6) months, the recusing judge is to state a reason for the recusal in the Order. This will provide the necessary transparency to this process so that litigants and attorneys will understand why the recusal was necessary. No subsequent court may refuse to accept the reassignment of the case from the clerk because of the sufficiency of the reason for recusal nor shall any litigant have the authority to question the court's decision to recuse.

13. State District Court Judges: Pursuant to Supreme Court Administrative Order No. 18, section 6, and legislation passed in the 2011 legislative session, eight (8) District Judges in Pulaski County were made State District Judges as of January 1, 2017. The Judges, as of January 1, 2018, will be: Judge Wayne Gruber, Judge Rita Bailey, Judge Randy Morley, Judge Milas H. "Butch" Hale, III, Judge Paula Juels Jones, Judge Melanie Martin, Judge Mark Leverett and Judge Vic Fleming.

The State District Judges are authorized to hear certain cases that have been referred to them by the Circuit Judges of Pulaski County, Arkansas or cases which have been transferred to them by consent, pursuant to Administrative Order No. 18.

The State District Judges have signed an exchange agreement, a copy of which is attached to this Amended Case Assignment Plan, permitting the respective judges to sit in the respective courts other than their own pursuant to and under the authority of Ark. Const. Amend. 80, Sec. 7; Ark. Code Ann. Sec. 16-17-102 and Supreme Court Administrative Order No. 18, section 6. By signing this exchange agreement, the District Judges will have the authority to hear circuit court cases with jurisdiction and venue in

Pulaski and Perry Counties that have either been referred to them or which have been transferred to them by consent.

The Circuit Judges of the Sixth Judicial Circuit, as indicated by their approval to this Plan, intend to utilize the full-time District Judges to the fullest extent possible pursuant to the requirements of Administrative Order No. 18, Sec. 6.

Implementation Plan. The State District Judges shall hear cases originating from the Office of Child Support and Enforcement, final Petitions for Orders of Protection, and unlawful detainer actions. The State District Judges have agreed to and have been assigned specific days to hear these cases. A calendar of the schedules of the judges will be maintained by the Administrative Judge and is open for inspection. The State District Court will hear cases Monday through Thursday of each week. A courtroom in the Pulaski County Courthouse has been created and used by the State District Judges. Beginning in 2021, the courtroom will be moved to the Juvenile Justice Center in the courtroom vacated by Judge James. The Circuit Court has arranged for staffing including a case coordinator and bailiff. Recording equipment has been installed and is in use.

The cases are assigned to one of the circuit judges, but the category of cases are heard by referral by the State District Judges pursuant to Admin. Order No. 18. In addition to the category of cases described above, other matters may be submitted to the State District Judges such as authorized by Admin. Order No. 18 (6)(b) upon agreement of the Circuit Judges and the State District Judges. If there are any substantive changes to this Implementation Plan, the Supreme Court will be asked to approve the change.

Criminal Magistrates. The administrative judge for the 6th Judicial Circuit, with the concurrence of a majority of the circuit court judges, and with the consent of the district judges, has appointed the judges of the Pulaski County District Court, the Little Rock District Court-Criminal Division, the Sherwood District Court, the North Little Rock District Court-Criminal Division, and the Maumelle/Jacksonville District Court as Criminal Magistrates to hear the following matters authorized by the Arkansas Rules of Criminal Procedure 1.8 (b)(iii)-(v):


1. Make a reasonable cause determination pursuant to Arkansas Rule of Criminal Procedure 4.1(e);
2. Conduct a first appearance pursuant to Arkansas Rules of Criminal Procedure 8.1, at which the Criminal Magistrate 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;
3. Conduct a preliminary hearing as provided by ACA Sec. 16-93-307(a).

14. Copies of District Court Administrative Plans: A copy of the Administrative Plans for the District Courts in Little Rock, North Little Rock, Pulaski County, Sherwood, Maumelle, Jacksonville, Wrightsville/Cammack Village and Perry County are attached. Paragraph 13, above, is incorporated into each of the District Court Administrative Plans as if set out word for word therein.


The Case Assignment Plan for the Sixth Judicial Circuit is submitted for approval on this 27th day of June, 2019.

Approved:


Judge Leon Johnson



Judge Chris Piazza


Approved by email. HUS
Judge Cathi Compton


Judge Herb Wright


Approves Plan except the restriction of hearing capital cases in crim + civil this
Judge Wendell Griffen


Judge Tim Fox


Judge Barry Sims


Judge Wiley Branton


Judge Mary Spencer McGowan

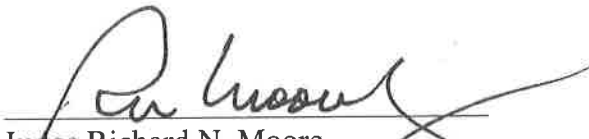

Judge Joyce Williams Warren


Judge Patricia James

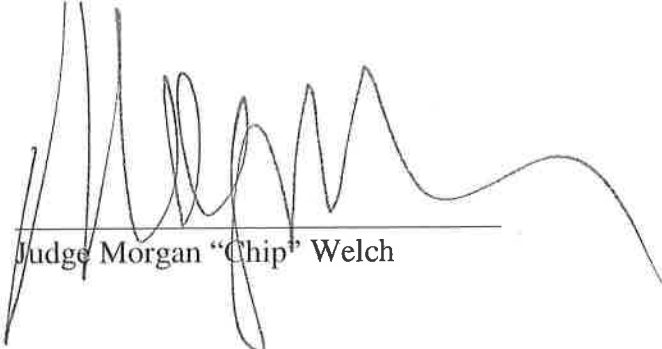
Approved by telephone - HUS
Judge Alice Gray


Judge Mike Reif



Judge Vann Smith



Judge Richard N. Moore



Judge Morgan "Chip" Welch



Judge Mackie Pierce

Administrative Plan for the 6thJudicial Circuit

Effective dates: 1-1-2020 through 12-31-2020

County: Pulaski

Subject areas

<u>Division</u>	<u>Judges Name</u>	<u>CV</u>	<u>CR</u>	<u>DR</u>	<u>JV</u>	<u>PR</u>
1 st	Leon Johnson		30			
2 nd	Chris Piazza	11.5	10			
3 rd	Cathi Compton			21.25		20
4 th	Herb Wright	6	20			
5 th	Wendell Griffen	11.5	10			
6 th	Timothy Fox	17				
7 th	Barry Sims		30			
8 th	Wiley Branton				33.3	
9 th	Mary Spencer McGowan	17				
10 th	Joyce Williams Warren				33.3	
11 th	Patricia James				33.3	
12 th	Alice Gray	17				
13 th	Mike Reif			21.25		20
14 th	Vann Smith			21.25		20
15 th	Richard Moore			21.25		20
16 th	Morgan "Chip" Welch	3		15		20
17 th	Mackie Pierce	17				

Administrative Plan for the 6thJudicial Circuit

Effective dates: 1-1-2020 through 12-31-2020

County: Perry

Subject areas

<u>Division</u>	<u>Judges Name</u>	<u>CV</u>	<u>CR</u>	<u>DR</u>	<u>JV</u>	<u>PR</u>
1 st	Leon Johnson		20			
2 nd	Chris Piazza		20			
3 rd	Cathi Compton	10 of CV, DR and PR				
4 th	Herb Wright		20			
5 th	Wendell Griffen		20 + 10 of CV, DR, PR			
6 th	Timothy Fox	10 of CV, DR, PR				
7 th	Barry Sims		20			
8 th	Wiley Branton				33.3	
9 th	Mary Spencer McGowan	10 of CV, DR, PR				
10 th	Joyce Williams Warren				33.3	
11 th	Patricia James				33.3	
12 th	Alice Gray	10 of CV, DR, PR				
13 th	Mike Reif	10 of CV, DR, PR				
14 th	Vann Smith	10 of CV, DR, PR				
15 th	Richard Moore	10 of CV, DR, PR				
16 th	Morgan "Chip" Welch	10 of CV, DR, PR				
17 th	Mackie Pierce	10 of CV, DR, PR				

Administrative Plan for the 6thJudicial Circuit

Effective dates: 1-1-2021 through 12-31-2021

County: Pulaski

Subject areas

Division	Judges Name	CV	CR	DR	JV	PR
1 st	Leon Johnson		29			
2 nd	new judge			18.8		20
3 rd	Cathi Compton		29			
4 th	Herb Wright	16				
5 th	Wendell Griffen	9	13			
6 th	Timothy Fox	16				
7 th	Barry Sims		29			
8 th	new judge				50	
9 th	new judge			18.8		20
10 th	new judge				50	
11 th	Patricia James	11	100 Drug	6		
12 th	Alice Gray	16				
13 th	Mike Reif			18.8		20
14 th	new judge			18.8		20
15 th	new judge			18.8		20
16 th	Morgan "Chip" Welch	16				
17 th	Mackie Pierce	16				

Administrative Plan for the 6thJudicial Circuit

Effective dates: 1-1-2021 through 12-31-2021

County: Perry

Subject areas

Division	Judges Name	CV	CR	DR	JV	PR
1 st	Leon Johnson		25			
2 nd	new judge	7.69 of all civil, domestic and probate				
3 rd	Cathi Compton	25+ 7.69 of CV, DR and PR				
4 th	Herb Wright	7.69 of all civil, domestic and probate				
5 th	Wendell Griffen	25 + 7.69 of CV, DR and PR				
6 th	Timothy Fox	7.69 of all civil, domestic and probate				
7 th	Barry Sims	25				
8 th	new judge				50	
9 th	new judge	7.69 of all civil, domestic and probate				
10 th	new judge				50	
11 th	Patricia James	7.69 of all civil, domestic and probate				
12 th	Alice Gray	7.69 of all civil, domestic and probate				
13 th	Mike Reif	7.69 of all civil, domestic and probate				
14 th	new judge	7.69 of all civil, domestic and probate				
15 th	new judge	7.69 of all civil, domestic and probate				
16 th	Morgan "Chip" Welch	7.69 of all civil, domestic and probate				
17 th	Mackie Pierce	7.69 of all civil, domestic and probate				

EXCHANGE AGREEMENT – STATE DISTRICT JUDGE

The undersigned State District Judges, pursuant to and under the authority of Ark. Const. Amend. 80, Sec. 7; Ark. Code Ann. Sec. 16-17-102 and Supreme Court Administrative Order No. 18, Sec. 6, agree that they permit the respective judges to sit in the respective courts other than their own. Further, by signing this Exchange Agreement, the District Judges will have the authority to hear circuit court cases with jurisdiction and venue in Pulaski County and Perry County that have either been referred to them or which have been transferred to them by consent.

In addition, the undersigned District Judges agree to the proposed Case Assignment Plan for the 6th Judicial Circuit and agree to hear child support cases originating with the Office of Child Support Enforcement, and other related issues thereto, final Petitions for Orders of Protection and unlawful detainer cases referred by the Circuit Court. The District Judges further agree to hear these cases at the Pulaski County Courthouse effective January 1, 2020.

Dated this 28th day of June, 2019.

Approved by email - 6-20-19 HVS
Judge Rita Bailey

Approved by email - 6-26-19 HVS
Judge Vic Fleming

Approved by email - 6-20-19 HVS
Judge Wayne Gruber

Approved by email 6-20-19 HVS
Judge Milas H. "Butch" Hale

Approved by email - 6-20-19 HVS
Judge Paula Juels Jones

Approved by email - 6-20-19 HVS
Judge Mark Leverett

Approved by email 6-26-19 HVS
Judge Melanie Martin

Approved by email, 6-26-19 HVS
Judge Randy Morley