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State of Michigan

Local Administrative  
Order

Washtenaw County  
Trial Court

Case Assignment

C22 2023-03J

P81 2023-02J

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Effective Date: August 7, 2023

*This administrative order rescinds and replaces Washtenaw County Trial Court Local Administrative Order C22 2023-01J & P81 2023-01J "Case Assignment."*

### CASE ASSIGNMENT

#### IT IS ORDERED:

Pursuant to MCR 8.110(C)(3)(b), it is hereby ordered that the case assignments described below be implemented effective August 7, 2023.

The chief judge of the trial court may make judicial assignments and may, pursuant to MCR 8.111, reassign cases to equalize judicial workloads. Further, in order to expedite the processing of certain case types, to take advantage of the expertise of a particular judge, or to facilitate the application of the one family/one judge concept, the chief judge may assign or reassign cases to ensure the effective and expeditious handling of such cases. In addition, the chief judge may order that any judge, upon the signing of an appropriate disqualification notice, be removed from the random assignment of a given case or cases as specified in the disqualification notice. When a disqualification order has been signed, the case shall be randomly assigned to another judge in the same division. If all judges of the division are disqualified, the case shall be randomly assigned to a judge in another division of the court. If that judge is disqualified, the case shall be randomly assigned to another judge in that division.

#### CIVIL/CRIMINAL DIVISION – General Jurisdiction Caseload

##### Civil Cases:

- A. Unless there is an underlying DA or DE case, the general jurisdiction civil caseload shall be assigned randomly as follows: Owdziej 25%, Connors 50%, and Kuhnke 25%. These cases include the following case types as described in the State Court Administrative Office's Case File Management Standards: ND, NF, NH, NI, NM, NO, NP, NS, NZ, CC, CD, CE, CF, CH, CK, CL, CP, CR, CZ, PC, PD, PR, PS, and PZ. If there is an underlying active DA or DE case, the new general jurisdiction civil case will be assigned to Judge Owdziej or Judge O'Brien (whomever has the underlying case).
- B. All AL cases shall be assigned to Judge Kuhnke.
- C. All Business Court (CB) cases shall be assigned to Judge Connors.

Criminal Cases:

- A. The general jurisdiction criminal case types described in State Court Administrative Office's Case File Management Standards (AH, AP, AR, AX, DJ, FC, FH, and FJ) shall be assigned randomly and equally as follows: Conlin 25%, Kuhnke 25%, and Slay 50%. If an individual is or was a defendant in a prior case, a new case will be assigned or reassigned to the judge (or successor judge) who last handled a case involving that individual; the intent of this practice is to ensure that a single judge, to the extent possible, handles all matters involving a single individual.
- B. Any case accepted into Drug Treatment Court shall be reassigned to Judge Kuhnke.

FAMILY DIVISION

The Family Division is responsible for hearing all domestic relations cases, all juvenile matters, all probate matters, and all proceedings involving personal protection orders.

All newly filed domestic relations cases, DC, DM, DO, DP, DS, DZ, UD, UE, UF, UI, UM, and UN, shall be randomly assigned as follows: Conlin 15%, O'Brien 45%, and Van den Bergh 40%.

- A. Judge O'Brien will handle all prosecutor default cases in DS & DP cases.
- B. All NC cases shall be assigned to Judge Owdziej.
- C. Unless there is an underlying Family Division case, all proceedings for personal protection orders (case types PH, PJ, PP, and VP and their predecessors) shall be assigned to Judge Slay. If there is an underlying pending or former Family Division case, all matters involving the PPO shall be assigned to the judge assigned to the underlying matter.
- D. All child support enforcement proceedings shall be heard by Judge Slay.
- E. All BR, CA, CY, DD, EM, GA, GL, GM, ID, LG, ML, TV, and PO cases shall be assigned to Judge Owdziej. Judge O'Brien will serve as primary back-up.
- F. All DA, DE, DH, JA, MI, PE, TR, and TT cases shall be assigned to Judge O'Brien. Judge Owdziej will serve as primary back-up.
- G. All contested AY cases involving a pending or former domestic relations case in Washtenaw County shall be assigned to the judge assigned to the domestic relations case.
- H. All AB, AC, AD, AF, AG, AM, AN, AO, AU, AY, NB, and PW shall be assigned to Judge Kuhnke. Judge Van den Bergh will serve as primary back-up.
- I. All DL and TL cases shall be assigned to Judge Conlin except as noted in J below. Judge O'Brien will serve as primary back-up.
- J. Any youth not initially detained and who do not have a sibling actively under supervision in the juvenile court will be assigned to Judge Connors if they are:
  - a. A first offense; and
  - b. Charged with domestic violence and/or home/family related malicious destruction of a building and/or malicious destruction of personal property

K. All JG, NA and VF cases shall be assigned to Judge Van den Bergh. Judge Owdziej will serve as primary back-up.

L. All NB, NC, JG, NA, and VF cases with Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) applicability will be assigned to Judge Connors.

PEACEMAKING

All cases in the Washtenaw County Trial Court are eligible for Peacemaking. All cases entered into the Peacemaking Court will be reassigned to Judge Connors.

TAX FORECLOSURE PREVENTION

All cases filed for property tax foreclosure will be assigned to Judge Conlin. When filing a tax foreclosure case, the County Treasurer shall note Judge Conlin as the judge on the caption and shall include the following on the caption: "Tax Foreclosure Prevention Docket."

APPELLATE PROCEDURE

A. All appeals to the Washtenaw County Trial Court shall be filed with Circuit Court Services following appropriate procedures as described in Subchapter 7.100 of the Michigan Court Rules.

B. Appeals of criminal matters heard in the District Court shall be assigned randomly to a judge hearing general jurisdiction criminal matters.

C. Appeals of civil matters heard in the District Court or by administrative agencies (case types AA, AE, AS, AV, and AW) shall be assigned randomly among the judges as follows: Owdziej 25%, Connors 50%, and Kuhnke 25%.

Dated: 8/2/23

Carol Kuhnke  
Carol Kuhnke, Chief Judge  
Washtenaw County Trial Court