

Eighth Judicial Circuit Family Law Advisory Group Minutes of March 19, 2007

The FLAG met on Monday, March 19, 2007 at the Alachua County Family and Civil Justice Center. In attendance were: Chairperson Myrna Neims, Ruth Angaran, Robin Davis, Markus Dietrich, Randi Dincher, Josh Fischer, Kathleen Fox, Arlene Huszar, Sheree Lancaster, Judge James P. Nilon, Jim Pearce, Pam Pearce, Leon Plympton, Marcia Rapczak, Dave Remer, Evelyn Sapp, and Nancy Wilkov.

This was the first meeting of 2007. Introductions were made and the mission of the FLAG was read so that those who had not attended before could understand the purpose of the group.

Judge Nilon gave an overview of Unified Family Court. He explained the concept of one family - one judge and that the intent was for one judge to be familiar with all the legal cases affecting one family and so that conflicting orders would not be entered. He referred to Administrative Order 5.1222 which describes how Unified Family Court is structured in the Eighth Judicial Circuit. The linchpin is dependency which means that, whenever a family has a pending family court case and a dependency case, those cases will be considered together by the same judge. The exception to that is Department of Revenue (DOR) child support cases.

The group discussed the need to have a representative from DOR and their contract attorneys come to the FLAG meetings.

General Magistrate Nancy Wilkov brought up the issue that CWLS (Child Welfare Legal Services of DCF) does not have good access to case information. Judge Nilon stated that they have access through LINDAS (Legal Information Network Data Access System for the Clerk's office) and one person in the protective investigation unit has access to ICMS (the court's Integrated Case Management System). CWLS needs access to civil cases which are only on ICMS. Ruth Angaran suggested establishing a subcommittee so that the same group of people could share information regularly. Marcia Rapczak stated that their (DCF) staff is not getting the information to the attorneys. Also, there is no way to connect cases from other counties. General Magistrate Evelyn Sapp said that she needs more information regarding the children especially regarding psychological records and medical records. Nancy Wilkov said there is a need for a better system for sharing dependency and delinquency information. The clerk's office has one database, the Sheriff's office has another, and the jail has another.

A subcommittee was established to address the issue of information sharing. Marcia Rapczak and Nancy Wilkov are on the committee.

Evelyn Sapp requested that the FLAG have a presentation from DCF regarding their internal processes. Marcia said she would find someone.

The group expressed an interest in having a glossary so everyone would understand the terms and abbreviations that the various agencies use. Marcia volunteered to head that effort.

Information regarding the FLAG can be posted on the court website in the Family Division section. Josh Fischer will post it once we decide what we want on it.

The next meeting will be Monday, April 16, 2007 at 4:00 PM.
