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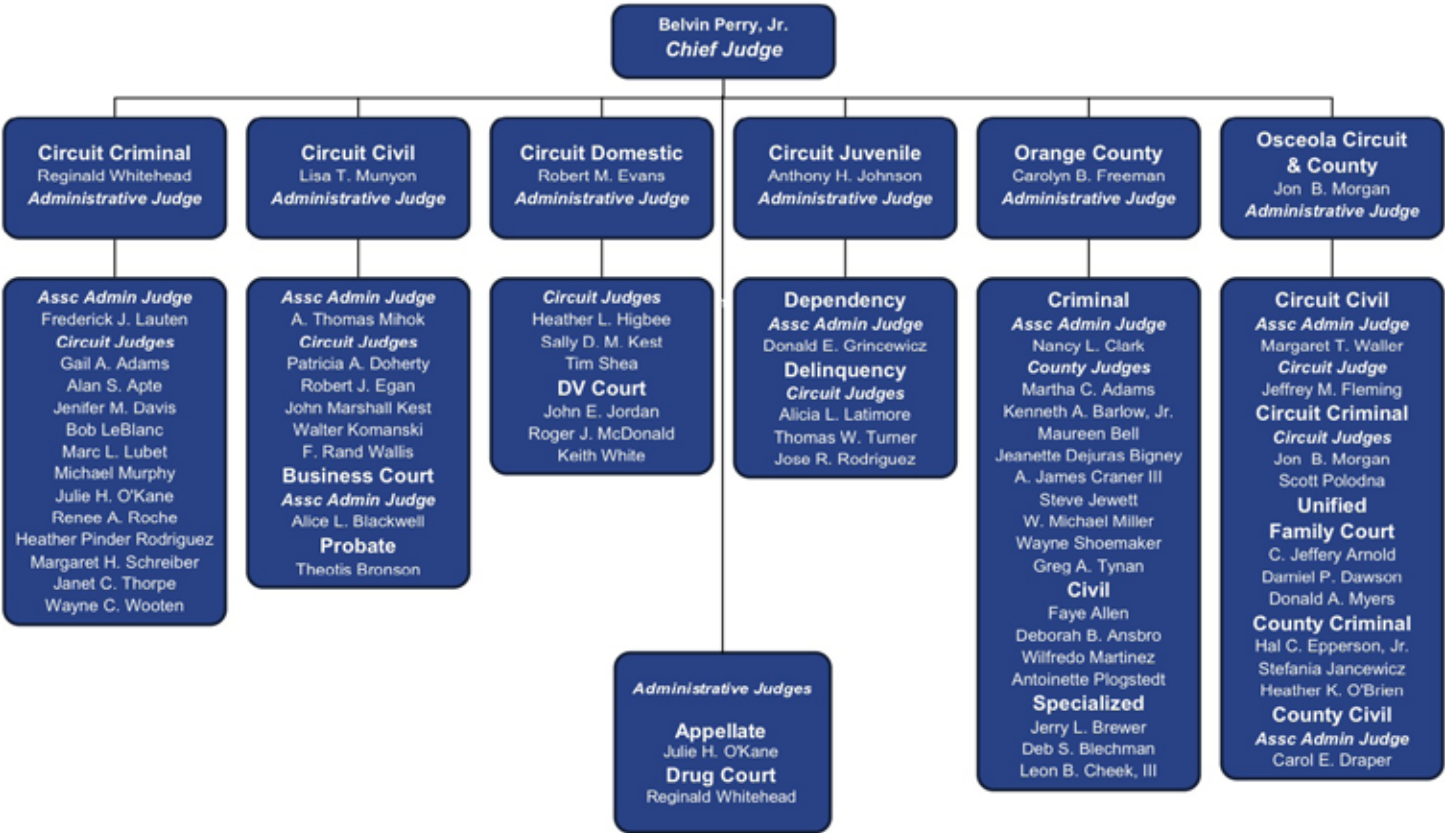
Judicial/Judicial Assistant Contact List

Mission Statements

The mission statement of the Ninth Judicial Circuit Court is to fairly and impartially administer justice and resolve disputes brought before the Court.

The mission statement of Court Administration is to efficiently and effectively provide comprehensive administrative support to all the judges of the circuit, to manage programs and to act as a liaison between the Court and the people it serves.

Judicial Organizational Chart



Administrative Judges Serving in 2011

- Honorable Frederick J. Lauten - Circuit Civil Division
- Honorable Lisa T. Munyon - Associate Civil Division
- Honorable Reginald K. Whitehead - Criminal Division
- Honorable Alice Blackwell - Associate Criminal Division
- Honorable Anthony H. Johnson - Juvenile Division
- Honorable Donald E. Grincewicz - Associate Juvenile Division
- Honorable Robert M. Evans - Family Court Division
- Honorable Jon B. Morgan - Osceola Circuit and County
- Honorable Margaret T. Waller – Osceola Associate Circuit Civil
- Honorable Carol E. Draper - Associate Osceola County
- Honorable Reginald K. Whitehead - Drug Court
- Honorable Janet C. Thorpe - Appellate Division
- Honorable Carolyn B. Freeman - Orange County
- Honorable Nancy L. Clark - Associate Orange County

Administrative Judges Serving in 2012

- Honorable Lisa T. Munyon - Circuit Civil Division
- Honorable A. Thomas Mihok - Associate Civil Division
- Honorable Alice L. Blackwell - Associate Business Division
- Honorable Reginald K. Whitehead - Criminal Division
- Honorable Frederick J. Lauten - Associate Criminal Division
- Honorable Anthony H. Johnson - Juvenile Division
- Honorable Donald E. Grincewicz - Associate Juvenile Division
- Honorable Robert M. Evans - Family Court Division
- Honorable Jon B. Morgan - Osceola Circuit and County
- Honorable Margaret T. Waller – Osceola Associate Circuit Civil
- Honorable Carol E. Draper - Associate Osceola County
- Honorable Reginald K. Whitehead - Drug Court
- Honorable Julie H. O'Kane - Appellate Division
- Honorable Carolyn B. Freeman - Orange County
- Honorable Nancy L. Clark - Associate Orange County

Judiciary



Gail A. Adams

Circuit Judge: 2001-present
Judge of Compensation
Claims: 1992-2001
JD: Stetson University
BA: University of
Central Florida
Major: Finance and
Economics



Martha C. Adams

Orange County Judge:
2007-present
JD: Nova Southeastern
University
BA: Rollins College
Major: Politics



Faye L. Allen

Orange County Judge:
2005-present
JD: Florida State University
BA: Florida A&M University
Major: Criminology



Deborah B. Ansbro

Orange County Judge:
2006-present
JD: University of Florida
BA: University of Central
Florida
Major: History



Alan S. Apte

Circuit Judge: 2003-present
JD: Nova University
BA: University of Miami
Major: Chemistry



C. Jeffery Arnold

Circuit Judge: 2007-present
Orange County Judge:
1994-2007
JD: Florida State University
BA: College of William
and Mary
Major: Pre-Law



Kenneth A. Barlow, Jr.

Orange County Judge:
2009-present
JD: Cumberland School
of Law
BA: University of the South
Major: English Literature



Maureen Bell

Orange County Judge:
2007-present
JD: University of Florida
MS: Biscayne College (St.
Thomas University)
BA: University of Florida
Major: Special Education

Judiciary



Jeanette Dejuras Bigney

County Judge: 2012-present
JD: Nova Southeastern University
BA: University of Illinois
Major: Speech Communication



Alice L. Blackwell

Circuit Judge: 1991-present
JD: University of South Carolina
BA: Furman University
Major: Political Science



Deb S. Blechman

Orange County Judge:
1995-present
JD: University of Florida
BA: University of Central Florida
Major: Political Science/
Pre-Law



Jerry L. Brewer

Orange County Judge:
1995-present
JD: Cumberland School of Law
BA: University of Central Florida
Major: Political Science



Theotis Bronson

Circuit Judge: 1993-present
County Judge: 1986-1993
JD: University of Florida
BA: Rollins College
AA: Seminole Community College
Major: Psychology



Leon B. Cheek III

Orange County Judge:
1998-present
JD: University of Florida
BA: University of Florida
Major: Political Science



Nancy L. Clark

Orange County Judge:
2000-present
JD: University of Florida
BA: University of Florida
Major: Political Science



A. James Craner

Orange County Judge:
2011-present
JD: University of Akron
BA: Kent State University
Major: Criminal Justice

Judiciary



Jenifer M. Davis

Circuit Judge: 2007-present
JD: University of Florida
MA: University of Florida
BA: University of Florida
Major: Criminal Justice



Daniel P. Dawson

Circuit Judge: 1991-present
JD: Stetson University
BA: University of Florida
Major: Business Administration



Patricia A. Doherty

Circuit Judge: 2010-present
JD: University of Florida
BS: University of Florida
Major: Physical Therapy



Carol Engel Draper

Osceola County Judge:
1993-present
JD: Stetson University
BA: Ithaca College
Major: Music Education



Robert J. Egan

Circuit Judge: 2008-present
JD: University of Florida
College of Law
BA: Mercer University
Major: Political Science



Hal C. Epperson, Jr.

Osceola County Judge:
2007-present
JD: Stetson University
BA: Stetson University
Major: Political Science



Robert M. Evans

Circuit Judge: 1995-present
JD: Florida State University
BA: Ball State University
Major: Political Science



Jeffrey M. Fleming

Circuit Judge: 2005-present
County Judge: 2002-2005
JD: Florida State University
BA: University of
Central Florida
Major: Political Science

Judiciary



Carolyn B. Freeman

Orange County Judge:
1991-present
JD: Florida State University
BA: Rollins College
Major: Business



Donald E. Grincewicz

Circuit Judge: 1995-present
County Judge: 1994-1995
JD: Detroit College of Law
BA: Wayne State University
Major: Political Science



Heather L. Higbee

Circuit Judge: 2007-present
County Judge: 2007-2011
JD: University of Florida
BA: Duke University
Major: English



Stefania Jancewicz

Osceola County Judge:
2006-present
JD: Stetson University
BA: Flagler College
Major: Secondary Education/
English



Steve Jewett

Orange County Judge:
2007-present
JD: University of Florida
BA: University of Florida
Major: Political Science



Anthony H. Johnson

Circuit Judge: 1997-present
Senior Judge: 1991-1996
County Judge: 1985-1990
JD: Stetson University
BA: American University
Major: Administration of
Justice



John E. Jordan

Circuit Judge: 2011-present
Orange County Judge:
2005-2011
JD: University of Florida
BA: University of
South Florida
Major: Political Science



John Marshall Kest

Circuit Judge: 2003-present
JD: Florida State University
BA: Rollins College
Major: Biology

Judiciary



Sally D. M. Kest

Circuit Judge: 2007-present
JD: Florida State University
BA: Florida State University
Major: Government



Walter Komanski

Circuit Judge: 1985-present
County Judge: 1981-1985
JD: John Marshall
Law School
BA: University of
Central Florida
Major: Communications/
Political Science



Alicia L. Latimore

Circuit Judge: 2006-present
JD: University of Florida
BS: Duke University
Major: Psychology



Frederick J. Lauten

Circuit Judge: 1999-present
County Judge: 1993-1999
JD: Villanova University
MBA: Rollins College
BA: Rollins College
Major: History



Bob LeBlanc

Circuit Judge: 2007-present
JD: University of Miami
BA: Bradford College
Major: Political Philosophy



Marc L. Labet

Circuit Judge: 2007-present
JD: University of Mississippi
BS: University of Florida
Major: Journalism



Wilfredo Martinez

Orange County Judge:
1998-present
JD: New York University
BA: Yale University
Major: Spanish Literature



Roger J. McDonald

Circuit Judge: 1997-present
JD: University of Florida
BA: Florida State University
Major: Finance

Judiciary



A. Thomas Mihok

Circuit Judge: 1995-present
JD: Stetson University
BA: United States Naval Academy
Major: Math, Science & Engineering



W. Michael Miller

Orange County Judge: 1991-present
JD: University of Florida
BA: Furman University
Major: Political Science



Jon B. Morgan

Circuit Judge: 2005-present
County Judge: 1998-2005
JD: University of Florida
BA: University of Florida
Major: Political Science



Lisa T. Munyon

Circuit Judge: 2003-present
JD: University of Florida
BA: University of Florida
Major: Finance



Mike Murphy

Circuit Judge: 2011-Present
Orange County Judge: 2005-2011
JD: University of Florida
BS: University of Florida
Major: Management



Donald A. Myers, Jr.

Circuit Judge: 2011-present
JD: University of Florida
BA: Emory University
Major: Psychology



Heather K. O'Brien

Osceola County Judge: 2010-present
JD: Georgetown University Law Center
BA: Colorado College
Major: Political Science



Julie H. O'Kane

Circuit Judge: 2003-present
JD: Stetson University
BA: Florida Atlantic University
Major: Marketing

Judiciary



Wayne J. Shoemaker

Orange County Judge:
1999-present
JD: South Texas
College of Law
BA: University of
Central Florida
Major: Criminal Justice



Janet C. Thorpe

Circuit Judge: 2000-present
JD: Emory University
BA: Union College
Major: American History/
Political Science



Thomas W. Turner

Circuit Judge: 2003-present
JD: Wayne State University
BA: Ball State University
Major: Political Science



Greg A. Tynan

County Judge: 2012-present
JD: Nova Southeastern
University
BA: University of
Central Florida
Major: Liberal Studies



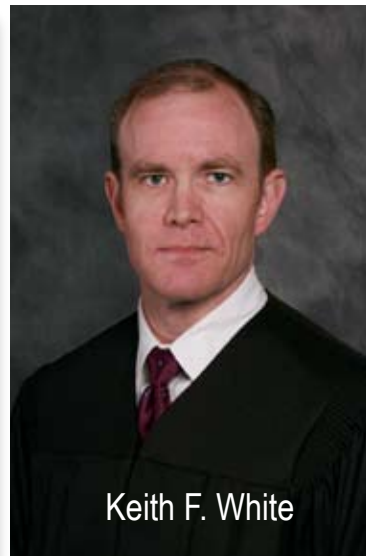
Margaret T. Waller

Circuit Judge: 1998-present
County Judge: 1994-1998
JD: University of Florida
BA: University of Florida
Major: English



F. Rand Wallis

Circuit Judge: 2008-present
JD: Stetson University
College of Law
BA: Furman University
Major: Political Science



Keith F. White

Circuit Judge: 2011-present
JD: Florida State University
BA: University of
Central Florida
Major: Engineering

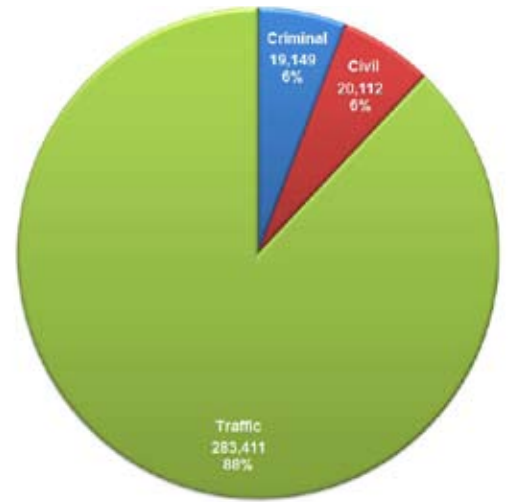


Reginald K. Whitehead

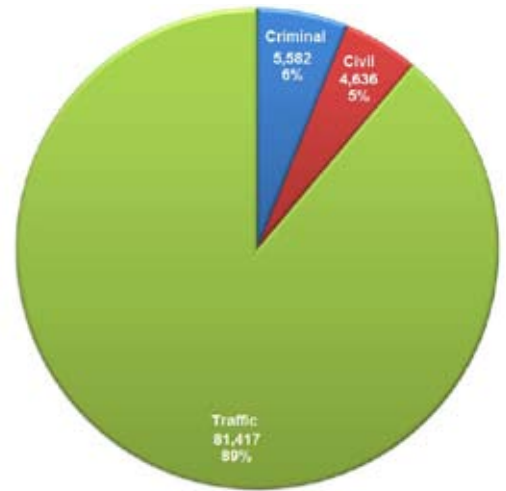
Circuit Judge: 1995-present
County Judge: 1994-1995
JD: University of Florida
BA: University of Mississippi
Major: Political Science

Overview of Case Filings in the 9th Circuit

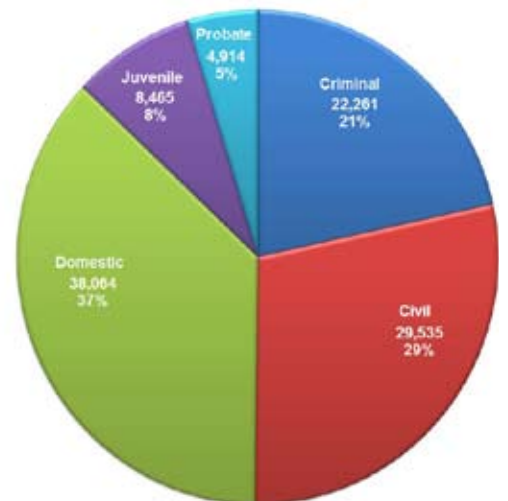
County Case Filings - Orange County 2011



County Case Filings - Osceola County 2011



Total Circuit Case Filings - 2011



Court Administration

A Court Administrator in each of the 20 judicial circuits is tasked with assisting the Chief Judge to carry out the court's administrative duties. The Court Administrator is selected by a majority vote of the circuit and county judges and reports directly to the Chief Judge. Matt Benefiel, Court Administrator for the Ninth Judicial Circuit, and his staff assist the judiciary in the following areas: budget administration, fiscal administration, public information, jury management, court reporting, case management, legal research, court technology, dispute resolution, and court interpreting. Court Administration develops and manages programs and services for the circuit, disseminates information about the court system to the media and general public and assists the judiciary with all aspects of court management.

Ninth Judicial Circuit Court Administration Telephone Directory

Administrative Offices (Orange County) **407-836-2050**
Administrative Offices (Osceola County) **407-742-2400**

ORANGE COUNTY

Audio/Visual Services 407-836-0522
Business Court 407-836-2366
Child Support Hearing Officers 407-836-2287
Court Interpreting Services 407-836-2399
Court Reporting Services 407-836-2270
Court Resource Center 407-836-0474
Dispute Resolution Services (Mediation) 407-836-2004
Drug Court 407-836-0419
Family Court Case Management 407-836-6054
Family Ties Program 407-836-0426
Human Resources/Fiscal Services 407-836-2261
Information Booth 407-836-0472
Juvenile Court Services 407-836-7590
Jury Services 407-836-2206
Magistrates 407-836-2210
Neighborhood Restorative Justice 407-836-9553
Parenting Coordination 407-836-2116
Sanctioned To Read 407-836-9313
Technology Services 407-836-6010
Teen Court 407-836-9517
Traffic Infraction Hearing Officers 407-836-2334

OSCEOLA COUNTY

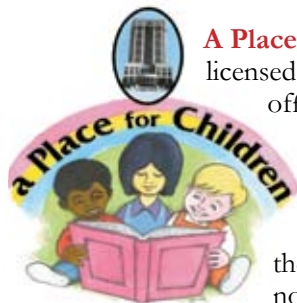
Audio/Visual Services 407-742-2530
Child Support Hearing Officers 407-742-2460
Children's Visitation Center 407-742-2467
Court Interpreting Services 407-836-2399
Court Reporting Services 407-742-2482
Dispute Resolution Services (Mediation) 407-742-2451
Drug Court 407-742-2431
Family Court Services 407-742-2538
Jury Services 407-742-2421
Magistrate 407-742-2428
Technology Services 407-742-2488
Teen Court 407-742-2465
Traffic Infraction Hearing Officer 407-742-2400

NinthCircuit.org

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Programs / Services



A Place for Children -- A Place for Children is a licensed, on-site childcare facility for families with official court business that provides children with a place to relax and have fun as an alternative to spending time in long court sessions or being exposed to adult situations. The program is operated by the Children's Home Society of Florida, a non-profit agency which has focused on child welfare issues for more than 100 years.

A Place for Children, which began in 1998, is funded by the City of Orlando, Court Administration, Central Florida Association of Women Lawyers, The Galloway Foundation, The Edyth Bush Charitable Foundation, The Florida Bar Association Foundation, and private contributions. More than 25,000 children have been served by this licensed, drop-off center since its inauguration. The program, which cares for children between the ages of 1 to 14, also offers information and referrals for community programs to high-risk families in need of social services. Last year more than one-quarter of the center's users accepted referrals for community services. Children are taken on a first-come, first-served basis. The professionally staffed center is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, on the 2nd floor of the Orange County Courthouse. For more information about the center, please call **407-836-2108, Ext. 3.**

Alternative Sanctions Program (Osceola) -- The Alternative Sanctions Program is funded by Osceola County through the 65 Fund under the direct supervision of the Family Court Programs Manager. Since its commencement in June of 2006, the program's mission has been to provide alternative sanctions to incarceration for juvenile offenders in Osceola County, such as:

- Community Service – When juveniles are court-ordered to complete community service, they may receive assistance to find a community service location in order to comply with their sanction. This service is provided only on an as-needed basis.
- Electronic Monitoring – This sanction is used to monitor juvenile offenders at their residence to ensure curfew compliance through the use of an ankle-worn transmitter and a Home Monitoring Unit.
- “Sanctioned to Read” is an individualized and prescriptive reading program which aims to help juvenile offenders build strong academic skills and to develop the desire and confidence to succeed. Juvenile offenders are sanctioned to attend 40 hours of tutoring during after-school hours. This service is provided only on an as-needed basis.
- Urinalysis Screening – When juveniles are ordered to submit to alcohol and/or drug screening, they may receive assistance to complete their sanctions through the Alternative Sanctions Coordinator, who provided 298 urinalysis drug screens in 2011.

The Alternative Sanctions Coordinator also supervises and provides case management to the Juvenile Drug Court Program participants. For more information, call **407-742-2518.**

An Afternoon in the Courthouse Seminar (Orange) -- This award-winning seminar's focus is to share helpful hints with area

attorneys who practice before the judges of the Ninth Judicial Circuit Court. It provides insight into local judicial practices and procedures and is designed to teach new attorneys the “nuts and bolts” of how to successfully navigate the courts. The seminar, presented by the Young Lawyers Section of the Orange County Bar Association, is open to attorneys, law clerks, and legal assistants, and is offered once a year. Teams of judges from various divisions teach the seminar. During the past five years, more than 1,750 attorneys, paralegals, and law students have participated in these seminars. For more information, call the Orange County Bar Association at **407-422-4551.**



Audio/Visual Services -- The Ninth Judicial Circuit's Audio Visual (A/V) Department is recognized as a world leader in courthouse and courtroom technology. The A/V Department provides comprehensive support for the Orange and Osceola County Courthouses, the Thomas S. Kirk Juvenile Justice Center, the 3 branch courthouses and the 3 courtrooms located

at the Orange County Jail. A/V staff have designed and installed cutting-edge technology, which centralizes service delivery and support. From a single location or from any computer on the network, A/V staff facilitates and supports video arraignments and initial appearances, video conferencing, digital court reporting, centralized interpreting, media production, evidence presentation systems, and Internet broadcasting. In addition to covering more than 70 court venues, A/V staff also maintains and supports the Roger A. Barker Courtroom, one of the most technologically advanced courtrooms in the world. An audio/video pedestal is located at both the courthouse and jail facilities to accommodate the media for courtroom, initial appearance, and arraignment proceedings. An engineer is available at all times to assist with signal connection and troubleshooting. A request form for remote video testimony, as well as a listing of all A/V services, can be found at www.NinthCircuit.org. For assistance, in Orange County call **407-836-0522** and in Osceola County call **407-742-2530.**

Child Support Hearing Officers -- Child Support Hearing Officers assist judges by handling cases assigned to the domestic relations division, thereby reducing each judge's heavy caseload. The hearing officers are responsible for hearing and resolving all Department of Revenue related child support cases. These cases are filed by the Department of Revenue and include voluntary paternity actions, establishment of support, public assistance reimbursement, medical/health insurance obligations, and the enforcement and modification of existing support orders. The hearing officers also hear and resolve establishment, enforcement, and modification of out-of-state support requests (UIFSA actions). With a successful hearing officer program, the citizens of the State of Florida are assured that state tax



Programs / Services

dollars and assets are used effectively and efficiently. To ensure that parents provide for the support and well-being of their minor children, please call **407-836-2287** in Orange County and call **407-742-2460** in Osceola County.

Children's Visitation Center (Osceola) -- The center opened in Osceola County in February of 1999, thanks to a collaborative effort between local government, the school system, law enforcement, and the courts. It is a court-operated, visitation-monitored exchange center where children affected by domestic violence injunctions, divorce, paternity, criminal, and dependency cases can spend time with their non-custodial parent in a pleasant and safe atmosphere. The center also provides monitored exchanges and day-visit services, allowing parents child visitation through safe exchanges. Since the program began, 1,258 families, including 2,147 children, have been served. Participation in this program requires a court order. For information, call **407-742-2467**.



Civil Traffic Infractions Hearing Officer Program -- The purpose of the Civil Traffic Infractions Hearing Officer Program is to divert less serious civil traffic infractions away from the more formal traffic court. The traffic hearing officers are members of The Florida Bar and are subject to The Florida Bar Code of Professional Responsibility and to relevant portions of the Code of Judicial Conduct. They have the power to accept pleas from defendants, hear and rule upon motions, decide whether a defendant has committed a civil traffic infraction, and adjudicate or withhold adjudication in the same manner as a county court judge. They cannot, however, conduct contempt proceedings, hear any case involving an accident with injuries, or suspend a defendant's driver's

Civil Traffic Hearing Officers



license. The Civil Traffic Infractions Hearing Officer Program is an essential part of the court system. In Orange County, please call **407-836-2334**. In Osceola County, please call **407-742-2400**.

Community Relations/Public Information -- The judges and staff of the Ninth Circuit are committed to educating the public on the workings of the court and the role and responsibilities the court has within the community. For this reason, the court has developed a comprehensive public information program that inspires public trust and confidence and allows for greater transparency within our third branch of government. Successful community outreach programs and services include: Inside the Courts, Judicial Ride-Along, Speakers Bureau, and Town Halls. The court's award-winning website, www.NinthCircuit.org, offers a wealth of information and educational resources for both legal professionals and self-represented litigants. The court has delved further into the

technological realm by creating jury videos, initial appearance and arraignment videos, and public service announcements on court programs and services. Many of these videos are produced in different languages and can be viewed on the court's website, or on Orange TV, Government Access. Most recently, the Ninth Circuit can now be followed on Twitter for updates on court events and information. In addition, the judges and court staff are always ready to visit schools, community groups, and professional organizations to speak about the operations of our courts. For additional information, please call **407-836-2047** or email ctadk11@ocnjcc.org.



Complex Business Litigation Court -- Established in 2003, the Complex Business Litigation Court is the first court in Florida devoted entirely to complex business litigation cases. It serves as a subdivision of the Circuit Civil Division in Orange County, and was created to hear more complicated cases, which normally require more intense case management. By limiting its focus to complex business litigation, the court provides a streamlined process for efficiently and effectively resolving complicated corporate and commercial disputes in a fairly short amount of time, thereby greatly reducing the costs associated with lengthy litigation. The court also places great emphasis on alternative dispute resolution and pre-trial settlement, which significantly reduces the cost of court operations. Cases involving contracts, Article 9 and antitrust suits, intellectual property, franchise disputes and/or unfair competition disputes are among the cases suitable for adjudication in this subdivision, provided the disputed amount is greater than \$75,000.00. For more information, in Orange County please call **407-836-2366**.



Court Interpreting Services -- The Ninth Judicial Circuit faces the ever-growing challenge of meeting the needs of Central Florida's increasing ethnic population and its diverse languages. In response to this challenge, the court operates a court interpreter program staffed by a number of certified Spanish interpreters and a program manager. Spanish is the most frequently used language, followed by Creole, Portuguese, American Sign Language, Vietnamese, and Arabic. By law, interpreters are required in all criminal cases where a defendant or a witness does not speak or understand English. The use of qualified court interpreters allows a non-English speaking person the ability to meaningfully participate in the judicial process.



Court interpreters are assigned to cover all circuit and county criminal cases, as well as traffic cases, initial appearances, domestic violence injunctions, and juvenile court matters. They are not for public hire. For non-Spanish languages, freelance interpreters are contracted. The Circuit maintains a roster of highly qualified individuals who provide their services upon request. These

Programs / Services

freelance interpreters are provided with training and skill-building workshops to ensure quality of service.

In an effort to meet the growing demand for interpreters despite the circuit's limited resources, the Ninth Judicial Circuit created and implemented a first-of-its-kind remote interpreting system in 2007 that allows interpreting services to be conducted remotely between the Orange and Osceola County Courthouses, the branch courthouses, the Juvenile Justice Center, and the Orange County Jail Booking and Release Center. This remote system maximizes the number of cases an interpreter can cover on a given day, which results in considerable savings to the State interpreter budget. In fact, the implementation and expansion of this system has resulted in a net savings of \$110,000 in the interpreter budget allotment over the last fiscal year. Additionally, the system has reduced contractual expenditures by 38%. Currently, the Ninth Circuit is working towards expanding the use of its centralized remote interpreting program to cover a statewide network. To learn more, call **407-836-2399** in Orange and Osceola Counties.

Court Reporting Services --

The Office of Court Reporting Services is responsible for the official record of all criminal court proceedings in the Ninth Judicial Circuit, plus other proceedings per statute and local administrative order. There are four separate departments of Court Reporting Services:



- Osceola Court Reporting
- Official Court Reporting
- Digital Court Reporting, Orange County Division
- Digital Court Reporting, Juvenile Division

The Office of Technology Services in Orange County and the Office of Information Systems in Osceola County is responsible for maintenance and support of all court reporting technology. All transcripts/duplicate media requests are produced in-house. In 2011, all four departments combined produced 121,332 pages of transcript and 1,820 CD copies of proceedings. The department has one manager and 35 court reporters in Orange County and 9 court reporters in Osceola County.

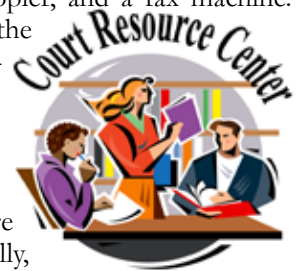
The Osceola Court Reporting Department covers all Osceola County circuit criminal courts, juvenile delinquency and dependency, misdemeanor and traffic courts, domestic violence court, initial appearances and arraignments, probate, guardianship, and other courts as assigned. The circuit criminal trials are covered by stenographic court reporters, and all other proceedings are covered digitally at a central monitoring station. This department has a staff of 9 reporters who produced 24,298 pages of transcript and 422 CD copies of proceedings in 2011. For more information, call **407-742-2482**.

The Official Court Reporting Department (Orange County) covers all Orange County circuit criminal trials and other courts as assigned. Staff also digitally covers circuit hearings. This department has a staff of 14 reporters who produced 53,379 pages of transcript in 2011. For more information, call **407-836-2280**.

The Digital Court Reporting Department (Orange County) covers all Orange County circuit criminal hearings. Staff also covers circuit criminal trials as assigned. In addition, the department covers misdemeanor and traffic courts, domestic violence court, drug court, initial appearances and arraignments, probate, guardianship, mental health and Baker Act hearings, 3 satellite courts, and other courts as assigned. All criminal courts are covered from the reporter's individual workstation. All other courts are covered at the location of the proceedings. This department has a staff of 17 who produced 37,238 pages of transcript, plus 1,238 CD copies of proceedings in 2011. For more information, call **407-836-2270**.

The Digital Court Reporting Department, (Juvenile Division) covers all juvenile court proceedings, both dependency and delinquency, from the reporter's individual workstation. This department has a staff of 4 who produced 6,417 pages of transcript, plus 160 CD copies of proceedings in 2011. For more information, call **407-836-7503**.

Court Resource Center -- The Court Resource Center was created to provide an environment where court visitors could perform legal research and obtain case-related information. The Ninth Judicial Circuit Court partners with the Orange County Bar Association to equip the center with court brochures, telephones, Internet-ready computers, printers, a copier, and a fax machine. Each year nearly 20,000 visitors use the center's resources, oftentimes to file last-minute requests or to comply with legal procedures. The center, which is staffed by Court Administration, is open to all Orange County Courthouse visitors and is located in room 365. Office hours are from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Additionally, many of the center's services can be found online at the court's website, **NinthCircuit.org**. For more information, call **407-836-0474**.



Courthouse Law Academy -- Educating the leaders of tomorrow, the Courthouse Law Academy is an active, hands-on program that gives students true courtroom experience and exposes them to our dynamic judicial system. Students participate in a mock trial moderated by a judge, where they take on the role of prosecutor, defense attorney, clerk, juror, and judge in order to try the "Cookie Caper" and "Popcorn on the Mind" cases, among others.

The Courthouse Law Academy, while sometimes zany, is always an exciting way to learn about the courts and its vital role in the community. Additionally, the program emphasizes the importance of the individual and encourages young people to strive to do their best. The Courthouse Law Academy is available to all school groups and youth organizations. Programs are developed for various age groups. The academy is free and can be tailored to fit an organization's unique needs. Reservations are required, though, and group sizes are limited. For more information or to schedule this fun and educational program in Orange County, call **407-836-0521**.



Programs / Services

Courtroom 23 (The Roger A. Barker Courtroom) -- The Roger A. Barker Courtroom, located on the 23rd floor of the Orange County Courthouse, is a high-tech courtroom that seamlessly integrates the latest in technology, and is one of the most advanced and integrated courtrooms in the world. The project began in March 1997, when staff from the Ninth Circuit traveled to Courtroom 21, located in the William & Mary Law School, Williamsburg, VA, to tour the preeminent high-tech courtroom. Two years later, after much planning, discussion and hard work, the Ninth Judicial Circuit formally opened its own technologically advanced courtroom – Courtroom 23. The courtroom contains the following key elements:



- advanced audio
- digital court reporting
- real time court reporting
- document camera
- DVD/CD playback
- high definition LED display
- fiber-optic cabling
- laptop connections
- touch screen control
- video annotation
- video conferencing
- public wireless network

With annual upgrades, the courtroom continues to evolve to stay on the technological edge. Courtroom 23 is open for tours and orientation. If interested, please call **407-836-2380** or visit the Courtroom 23 web page at www.ninthcircuit.org/programs-services/courtroom23/.

Dependency Case Coordination Program -- This Court Administration program provides administrative, operational and clerical assistance to juvenile dependency judges. The Department of Children and Families files a petition to intervene or remove a child from parental custody in instances where there are allegations of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect. The department may remove the child until the concerns are resolved. When the case begins, the dependency case coordinator assists indigent parents in obtaining court-appointed counsel and helps expedite the appointment of a guardian ad litem, who represents the best interest of the child. Additionally, the case coordinator acts as a liaison among the parties to promote communication and efficiency, and provides any assistance necessary to resolve problems and avoid unnecessary delays. For more information about this program, call **407-836-9560** in Orange County. In Osceola County, a Court Program Specialist for the Unified Family Court helps expedite case processing through the courts. Please call **407-742-2531** for more information.

Dispute Resolution Services -- Mediation is a way to help two parties resolve a dispute through discussions. The mediator meets with both sides to encourage and facilitate a resolution. Mediation

programs provide litigants with an efficient and satisfying alternative to the traditional process. By reaching a settlement, parties avoid the uncertainty of a trial. Mediation is an important part of conflict resolution in a wide range of disputes in the court system. The circuit has several programs in place using professional volunteer and contract mediators. In an effort to resolve cases before trial, judges may refer a variety of cases to mediation, including county civil, juvenile dependency, domestic relations and some restitution. For information concerning Orange County's Dispute Resolution Services, call **407-836-2004**. For information concerning mediation in Osceola County, call **407-742-2451**.



Arbitration: A process of dispute resolution in which a neutral third party renders a decision after a hearing at which both parties have an opportunity to be heard. Arbitration may be court ordered (non-binding) or voluntary (binding or non-binding depending on the agreement).

Circuit Civil Arbitration: The Ninth Circuit maintains a list of attorneys who are trained and who are willing to serve as arbitrators in court-ordered, non-binding arbitration in the Ninth Circuit.

Small Claims Arbitration: A voluntary program for unrepresented parties in small claims cases as an alternative to judicial action. If both parties agree, they may go before a panel of three arbitrators to have the case heard. The result is binding on all parties.

County Mediation: Involves all county civil cases, including small claims, and landlord/tenant actions. In 2011, 13,715 small claims and county civil cases were referred to mediation in Orange and Osceola Counties. Approximately 70% of these mediated cases reached an agreement.

Family Mediation: Consists of mediation in family cases, including divorces, paternity, visitation, parental rights, temporary matters, child support, and issues that arise in cases that may have already been before a judge. In 2011, 4,065 family cases were referred to mediation in Orange and Osceola Counties. Approximately 65% of those cases mediated reached full or partial agreement.

Juvenile Dependency Mediation: Involves cases with accusations of child abuse, neglect, or abandonment. The parent, attorney, or guardian ad litem who is assigned to advocate for the child's best interests and the Department of Children and Family Services discuss case plans for reunification or termination of parental rights. In 2011, 138 cases were referred to mediation in Orange and Osceola Counties.

Parenting Coordination: This program serves as an outreach to families in conflict. There are approximately 30 trained and certified Parenting Coordinators whose goal is to reduce stress and high conflict in children of divorced and divorcing parents. They assist parents in learning to co-parent their children by implementing a parenting plan. This oftentimes involves teaching

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the parents new communication skills, new conflict resolution skills, and new thought patterns for child-focused thinking. The Parenting Coordinator makes recommendations to the parties and, when necessary, has the ability to make limited decisions within the scope of the court's order of appointment. In 2011, Parenting Coordinators rendered approximately 2,600 hours of service to families. For more information about the Parenting Coordination program, [407-836-2116](tel:407-836-2116) or email at ctadrfl@ocnjcc.org.

Domestic Violence Court -- The Domestic Violence Court has dramatically changed the way domestic violence and other family-related cases are heard and processed. In 2011, there were 5,172 domestic violence injunctions filed with the court. Streamlining the way in which these cases are processed ensures more accountability, addresses a variety of safety issues, enhances enforcement efforts, and provides judges with the comprehensive information they need to make consistent and informed decisions. There are 3 courtrooms on the 16th floor of the Orange County Courthouse set aside to hear cases where domestic violence has been alleged. Security officials direct the petitioners and the respondents to separate, secure reception areas. All cases are heard individually. In addition, cases are scheduled in blocks of time throughout the day so parties do not have to spend hours at the courthouse. For more information, in Orange County call [407-836-0579](tel:407-836-0579). In Osceola County, domestic violence cases are handled by the Unified Family Court judges. Please call [407-742-2531](tel:407-742-2531) for more information.

Drug Courts -- The Ninth Judicial Circuit recognizes the effectiveness of drug court for adult and juvenile offenders and operates them in both counties.

Adult Drug Court: The Ninth Circuit Court Orange/Osceola Drug Court Program Office (OCDCPO) was started in 2000. This is a diversionary program created for nonviolent, felony drug offenders who have admitted guilt. It provides for identification, evaluation, case management, and placement of substance abuse offenders into treatment services. The drug court judge reviews progress reports and holds biweekly status hearings for the participants. Participants who do not comply with the rules appear before the judge for appropriate action (sanctions). In fiscal year 2010-2011, there were 767 referrals to OCDCPO in Orange County, of which 616 were referred to the treatment provider for treatment services, 244 were admitted to treatment, 100 were unsuccessful, and 185 graduated from the program. In 2011, 128 defendants were accepted into the Adult Felony Drug Court Programs in Osceola County. During this period, 59 defendants successfully graduated. For information about the Osceola County Adult Drug Court Program, call [407-742-2431](tel:407-742-2431). In Orange County, call [407-836-0501](tel:407-836-0501).



Delinquency Drug Court: When juveniles' illegal behavior is exacerbated by substance abuse, select delinquency cases are referred to a special docket handled by a designated judge. The juvenile drug court judge maintains close oversight of each case. This program

is part of a court initiative that established interagency cooperation focused on developing a judicial-led treatment program. The four-phase outpatient model includes an aftercare component. Case management personnel make regular school and home visits and require that all participants undergo random urinalysis testing. The Juvenile Delinquency Drug Court Program was recognized and honored as a "Mentor Court" by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs Drug Courts Program Office. In Orange County, for fiscal year 2010-2011, 82 juveniles were admitted and 35 were discharged, of which 19 were successful graduates, amounting to a 54% successful completion rate. In 2011, 21 defendants were accepted into the Juvenile Drug Court Program in Osceola County. During this period, 19 defendants successfully graduated. For more information, in Orange County call [407-836-9500](tel:407-836-9500) and in Osceola County call [407-742-2518](tel:407-742-2518).

Family/Dependency Drug Court: The Dependency Drug Court program was launched in Orange County with the goal of reunifying families. Dependency Drug Court monitors the progress and compliance of a child's parent who is currently involved in drug use. The drug court program coordinator and treatment staff monitor the participant's progress through treatment. Participants submit to random urinalyses, at times, as often as 5 times a week. The participant attends biweekly hearings before the designated judge to assess their progress. In fiscal year 2010-2011, 53 parents were screened for the program and 35 parents were referred to treatment. More than 55 children have been impacted while their parents went through the program. In Orange County, call [407-836-9500](tel:407-836-9500).

Juvenile Reentry Drug Court: The reentry drug court program identifies youths who will be or have been committed to a Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) commitment facility and assists with their placement in this program as a condition of release. The juveniles are closely monitored by treatment staff, DJJ staff, and staff from the conditional release program. All parties must attend biweekly hearings before the designated judge, who assesses their progress. Participants are required to submit to weekly random urinalysis. In 2011, 21 defendants were accepted into the Juvenile Drug Court Program in Osceola County. During this period, 19 defendants successfully graduated. For information about the Osceola County Juvenile Drug Court Program, call [407-742-2518](tel:407-742-2518).

Osceola County Misdemeanor Drug Court: This program started in 2007, as a new diversionary program for nonviolent misdemeanor drug offenders. The program provides evaluations, case management, and treatment for offenders. The judge and the team members review the client's progress on a biweekly basis. Clients who are compliant may have their charges dropped or adjudication withheld upon successful completion of the program. For more information, call [407-742-2431](tel:407-742-2431).

Facilities Support Services -- The Office of Court Administration works closely with the various agencies responsible for courthouse facilities by assisting and advising them on issues regarding building repair, growth, and necessary improvements -- which includes all support services such as copiers, telecommunications, and video

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equipment, as well as air conditioning, elevators, and custodial needs. Court Administration implemented an emergency notification call-in system in 2004, which aims to provide current information for all judges, judicial assistants, and employees should an emergency occur. Both Orange and Osceola County used the system successfully during 3 major hurricanes in 2004. Facilities Support Services also trains staff on emergency evacuation procedures. For assistance, call **407-836-2104** in Orange and call **407-742-2415** in Osceola.

Family Court Case Management -- Family Court Case Management supervises cases for parties who have filed for divorce or requested a name change yet have opted not to hire an attorney. The department provides information on mandatory parenting classes and acts as a liaison between social service agencies and the court. Case management duties include reviewing court files, overseeing cases throughout their pendency, scheduling final hearings, and preparing and processing income deduction orders. In Orange County, Family Court Services began operating in February of 1995. Osceola County's intake unit opened in May of 1996. In 2011, there were 6,206 divorce filings in Orange County, of which Family Court Services managed 4,308 (69%) pro se cases, i.e. self-represented litigants. In 2011, there were 5,422 domestic cases filings in Osceola County, of which Family Court Services managed 1,543 (28%) pro se cases, i.e. self-represented litigants. The unit reviewed a total of 5,175 files composed of new, re-opened, and closed cases. The unit also prepared 996 final judgments. In addition, the unit monitored compliance with Court orders and referred 415 cases to mediation. Additionally, it assisted 8,689 walk-in litigants and answered 2,323 phone calls to inform them about the process and status of their open case. To learn more about the unit in Osceola County, call **407-742-2474**. In Orange County, call **407-836-6054**.



Family Court Programs Division -- In Osceola County, this division oversees various programs/units, such as the Court Case Management Unit, Unified Family Court Unit, Teen Court Program, Juvenile Drug Court Program, Alternative Sanctions Program, Guardianship, Visitation Center, Dispute Resolution Services, Guardianship Case Management, and Injunction Processing Unit. These programs, with the exception of Dispute Resolution Services, are housed on the third floor of the courthouse. In 2011, assistance was provided to 20,033 litigants on a walk-in basis. For more information, contact **407-742-2412**.

Family Ties -- The concept for the Family Ties Program grew out of a concern for the safety of children in families embroiled in custody disputes. Family Ties is a court-operated, visitation-monitored exchange program that provides parent-child contact in a friendly environment that guarantees the child's safety. Family Ties opened in September of 1997. Since



its inception, the program has supervised 11,512 visits and 5,149 child exchanges. More than 1,698 families and 2,603 children have participated in the program and benefitted from its services. Family Ties creates a pleasant and safe environment where children can spend time with their noncustodial parent. The program also provides monitored exchange services for families that need help safely exchanging children between parents. Participation in Family Ties requires a court order. For information call **407-836-0426**. In Osceola County, this service is being provided by the Children's Visitation Center. For more information, please call **407-742-2467**.

Fiscal Services -- This department is responsible for all fiscal activities in the Ninth Judicial Circuit Court, including budgeting, revenue analysis, purchasing and travel. Fiscal Services evaluates revenues and monitors expenditures from several funding sources, including Orange and Osceola Counties and the State of Florida. For more information, call **407-836-2234** in Orange County and call **407-742-2418** in Osceola County.



Guardianship Monitor Program -- The Guardianship Monitor Program was established in Orange County to ensure that all court-appointed guardians comply with Florida law by meeting filing deadlines and providing the appropriate level of personal and/or financial care to their wards. The court currently employs one full-time court monitor for this purpose. The court monitor investigates allegations of abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation of all wards or the misappropriation of a ward's assets, and provides a written report to the court. The court monitor also makes sure certain guardians, including professional guardians, are qualified to serve by conducting criminal history and credit checks. In 2011, the court monitor completed more than 270 background checks, alerted the Court to more than 175 guardian applicants with questionable credit and/or criminal histories and located and brought into compliance 26 guardians. The court monitor also applied for one federal grant to aid in expanding the court monitor program. In Osceola County, guardianship cases are reviewed by the case manager/court monitor who provides a written report to the court after extensive research. The case manager reviewed and prepared 54 case manager status reports in 2011. To learn more about the unit, please call **407-836-6058** in Osceola or Orange County.

Human Resources Department -- This department is responsible for personnel administration, including employment classification and pay, employee benefits, employee relations, employee records, and training and development. In addition, the HR Department supervises the court's volunteer program. Human Resources is responsible for the Circuit's compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and for the intake and investigation of discrimination complaints filed under the Circuit's Civil Rights Complaint Procedure. For Human Resources, call



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407-836-2261 in Orange County and call **407-742-2440** in Osceola County. Applications for employment are available at www.NinthCircuit.org.

Injunction Processing Unit (Osceola) -- The Injunction Processing Unit, formerly known as the Victim Assistance Program, provides assistance to all crime victims – including, but not limited to, victims of domestic violence – as they proceed through the criminal justice system, particularly with injunction cases. The unit is funded by the Osceola County Clerk of the Court and is managed by Court Administration. It is a walk-in service – no appointment, referrals, or legal representation is required. Regular business hours are Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Over the past year, the Injunction Processing Unit was able to assist 4,200 litigants who were seeking information about protection orders and/or returning for additional services. The unit helped 1,676 litigants file petitions for protection orders, which included 196 during weekends, holidays, and/or after-hours. In addition, the unit provided information regarding additional community resources and gave 17,367 referrals. To learn more, call **407-742-2464**.

Inside the Courts -- Celebrating its 14th year, Inside the Courts has become a notable program for judicial outreach in the Ninth Circuit as well as the State of Florida. The four-session educational series taught by a team of judges is uniquely designed to allow citizens to learn about the court as they interact with judges in an informal setting. Topics presented include criminal and civil courts, probate and mental health, domestic, juvenile, traffic, and collections court, as well as mediation and court interpreting. Presentations are designed to be dynamic, promote audience participation, and provide ample opportunity for audience questions. In 2011, 233 citizens registered for the program and participants received certificates of completion from the court for attending at least 3 sessions. The program was featured in the winter 2009 issue of The Full Court Press, the official newsletter of the Florida State Courts, as a model program for court-community relationship building. As a result, the concept is being adopted by other circuits statewide. Inside the Courts is free to the general public and is held annually. Sessions are produced for broadcast and air regularly on Orange County's government channel, Orange TV. For more information or to register for the next program, call **407-836-0517** or visit www.NinthCircuit.org.



Internships -- In Osceola County, the Ninth Judicial Circuit offers internships to college students attending our local community colleges and universities. The internship program allows students an opportunity to get true hands-on experience in their area of interest, including our Injunction Processing Unit, Children's Visitation Center, and Family Court. The internship program coordinators take a genuine interest in providing our interns with a meaningful learning experience and are committed to the success of each student. For information, call **407-742-2415**.

Judicial Ride-Along Program -- The Ninth Judicial Circuit

offers local and state elected officials the opportunity to experience firsthand the work of the judiciary and the important role our courts play within the community. Tailored to the needs of visiting officials, the program allows the visitor to sit alongside a judge during court proceedings to directly observe the judicial process and to better understand the complexity and variety of cases that come before the court.

The program provides community leaders with insight into the operations of the courts and opens lines of dialogue between leaders and the court on matters of mutual concern. For more information, call **407-836-2047** or email ctadkl1@ocnjcc.org.



Jury Services -- The Ninth Judicial Circuit's Jury Management Program was initiated in October of 1990, in response to a Florida Supreme Court administrative order, to efficiently manage the time and fiscal resources allocated to jury services. Through automation and effective management, jurors are used more efficiently, resulting in fewer people needing to be summoned for jury service and therefore less inconvenience to our citizens. Prospective jurors called to service can submit an acceptable excuse or request a postponement by sending an email via the court's Internet website. In the state of Florida, prospective jurors are randomly summoned from a database provided by the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles. Jurors are required to serve for one day or the length of one trial. They are compensated at the rate of \$15 per day for the first three days if they are not paid by their employers, are unemployed, or are self-employed. Juror pay increases to \$30 per day after the fourth day. Prospective jurors report to the jury assembly room before they are assigned to a case.



In **Orange County**, jurors can take advantage of free Lynx bus service for transportation to and from the courthouse. In order to prepare for jury service, Orange TV airs a daily video, produced by Court Administration, with juror information. In addition, an orientation video is shown every morning at both the Orange and Osceola County Courthouses. The [NinthCircuit.org](http://www.NinthCircuit.org) website enables prospective jurors to check in after 5 p.m. to receive the next day's reporting instructions. Also, jurors can use storage lockers to secure their personal belongings. Additionally, vending machines, pay phones, board games, and reading materials create a more comfortable environment. Plus, the jury assembly room is equipped with cable TV and free wireless Internet access. The Cyber Cafe allows visitors the chance to browse the Internet or play computer games on any of its 21 computers. Books and magazines are donated for jurors to read or take home as they choose.

In **Osceola County**, the spacious jury assembly area is also equipped with amenities including vending machines, courtesy phones, a microwave, a refrigerator and complimentary coffee and tea service. A 12-computer Cyber Cafe enables jurors to browse the Internet or play computer games. The Cyber Cafe also contains a fax machine and laptop connections, as well as wireless capability for juror use. Reading materials, televisions, board games

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and “quiet rooms” make the jurors’ experiences more enjoyable. Storage lockers are available free of charge to secure personal items while at lunch or in a courtroom. For additional information about jury services, in Orange County call **407-836-2206** and in Osceola County call **407-742-2423**.

Law Student Internships -- Each year, the court matches a limited number of law school students with judges for a judicial internship for one semester or summer. Those selected work closely with the judges, observe court proceedings, and perform legal research and writing for their assigned judge or group of judges. The internships are volunteer positions (unpaid). Students in their second or third year of law school are preferred, and the interns must commit to a minimum of ten hours per week. Interns are subject to a criminal background check. If you are interested in a law student internship, please email a cover letter which includes your approximate start and end dates and approximate hours per week available to work to ctadds1@ocnjcc.org. Also, attach a résumé, short writing sample, and a transcript of your law school grades. For further information, contact **407-836-0411**.

Magistrates -- The magistrate program was created to assist the court system whereby magistrates preside over matters involving civil disputes, domestic relations, juvenile dependency and truancy, and mental health issues. The Ninth Judicial Circuit has 6 magistrates. One magistrate presides over circuit civil and domestic relations matters in Orange County; four magistrates preside over domestic relations and mental health matters -- three are assigned to Orange County and one to Osceola County -- and one magistrate presides over juvenile and truancy matters in Orange County. The magistrates are attorneys who are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Chief Judge. They preside over several thousand cases each year. For more information, please contact the magistrate division administrative offices at **407-836-2210**.



Media Relations -- It is the Ninth Judicial Circuit’s goal to meet the informational needs of the media and public, ensure the rights of litigants to fair court proceedings, and guarantee the operational integrity of the courts. Initial appearances and arraignments are broadcast daily on the court’s website, www.ninthcircuit.org. Media should visit

the court’s website to learn more about the policies and procedures for interaction between the media and the court. The circuit hosts media workshops to assist journalists in understanding the programs and services offered by the court. These workshops provide media representatives the opportunity to talk to the judiciary about topics of concern. Information is provided daily to news media about specific cases, new projects and innovations in the judicial system, and the court’s community outreach efforts. For more information, call **407-836-2047** or email ctadkl1@ocnjcc.org.

Mental Health Court (Osceola) -- Mental Health Court, which began in Osceola County in 2000, is a diversionary program aimed at helping mentally challenged individuals who have been arrested for nonviolent misdemeanor or felony offenses receive treatment in lieu of incarceration. The Mental Health Court judge is responsible for presiding over Mental Health Court and coordinating the roles of the judiciary with the functions of the various agencies and providers. For more information, call **407-742-2400** in Osceola County.



Neighborhood Restorative Justice Program -- The Neighborhood Restorative Justice (NRJ) Program is a diversionary program for first-time juvenile offenders. The program diverts less serious cases from the juvenile court system while empowering victims and the community so they can play a key role in the judicial process. The NRJ requires that juveniles take responsibility for their crimes and make the corresponding reparations. At the same time, the program builds on the offender’s strengths and assets to make them productive citizens. To be eligible, the juvenile must first admit he is guilty of the charges and must accept responsibility for the harm caused. A conference is scheduled with a Neighborhood Accountability Board, which is comprised of trained volunteers from the community, the victim, offender, offender’s parent(s) or guardian(s), and any community member affected by the crime, in the community where the offender lives. The parties discuss and develop appropriate sanctions for the juvenile. If victim restitution is owed, full payment is required in order to successfully complete the program. A sanctions coordinator, who is a law enforcement officer from the community, monitors the juveniles. The juveniles are required to check in once a week with their assigned sanctions coordinator. They are also placed on a behavior contract which assigns curfews, makes school attendance mandatory -- they cannot receive any referrals, suspensions or expulsions -- and prohibits the use of tobacco, alcohol, or drugs. If the program is completed, the original charge is dismissed; if not, the case is returned to the state attorney for prosecution in court. This program has been successful through partnerships with the police departments of Apopka, Ocoee, Winter Garden, Eatonville, Maitland, and the Orange County Sheriff’s Office. Referrals for the Neighborhood Restorative Justice Program are made at the discretion of the Juvenile States Attorney’s Office of the Ninth Judicial Circuit Court. In 2011, 105 juveniles completed the NRJ Program with the help of over 51 committed volunteers and police officers, who collectively volunteered over 3,500 hours of their time. Approximately \$12,710 of restitution was collected and paid to the victims of juvenile crimes in Orange County through the NRJ Program. The juveniles who completed the NRJ Program in 2011 performed 6,282 hours of community service in their respective communities. For more information, call **407-836-9553**.



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Ninth Circuit Website -- The Ninth Judicial Circuit's website is an award-winning, educational, and interactive site, providing a wealth of information on the judiciary and the courts. The site continues to evolve to meet the needs of users since a major upgrade was unveiled in October of 2007. The new design offers a dramatically different look and approach that provides portals configured for specific high-volume user groups and takes advantage of the latest in web and video streaming technology. The website content includes, but is not limited to, the following information:



- Administrative Orders
- Annual Reports
- Appellate Opinions
- Audio/Visual Services
- Community Relations
- Court Dockets
- Court Forms
- Court History
- Court Holidays
- Court Reporters
- Court Resource Center
- Courtroom 23
- Directions to the Courthouses
- Divisions
- Employment Opportunities
- Family Court Case Management
- Hearing Schedule
- Inside the Courts
- Judicial Profiles
- Jury Services
- Live Broadcast
- Podcasts
- Press Releases
- Speakers Bureau
- Statistics
- Talking Brochures
- Technology Services
- Videos

NinthCircuit.org receives millions of hits each year with over 100,000 daily inquiries. The Court's website is developed and maintained by the staff of the Ninth Judicial Circuit. Please visit the site at www.NinthCircuit.org.

Ninth In a Nutshell from the JAs -- The judicial assistants of the Ninth Circuit use this program to forge an information link between local law offices and the judiciary. Judicial assistants provide a procedural manual with helpful information about the circuit, including division assignments, telephone numbers, location of chambers, instructions for the Judicial Automated Calendaring System (JACS), court preferences for each judge, and other helpful hints. Order forms for the manuals are available on the court's website at <http://www.ninthcircuit.org/research/orders/>.

For more information, call **407-836-2350**.

Public Information Booth -- The Orange and Osceola Courthouses, as well as the Orange County Juvenile Justice Center, have public information booths. In Orange County, the booth is located in the courthouse rotunda and has been in operation since December of 1998. At the Thomas S. Kirk Juvenile Justice Center and at the Osceola County Courthouse the public information



booth is located in the main lobby. Volunteers are recruited and managed by Court Administration to staff the booths and provide assistance and information to litigants, attorneys, and the general public at these facilities. Volunteers provide a valuable service to the court, the county, and to the public. Since the program began, information booth volunteers in Orange County have logged more than 39,777 hours. During the 2010-2011 time frame volunteers in Orange County logged more than 3,260 hours, which represented a savings of more than \$48,000.00. In that same period, information booth volunteers in Osceola County logged 415 hours, which represented a savings of more than \$6,000 last year.

Sanctioned to Read -- The Ninth Judicial Circuit's Sanctioned to Read program is devoted to improving the reading skills and self-confidence of juveniles who are court ordered or court referred into the program. Sanctioned to Read was created in August 2003 to achieve literacy for students through a 40-hour tutoring program that is highly individualized and motivational. The program also incorporates diagnostic and prescriptive elements. Students are tutored in various skills, including: oral (receptive) vocabulary, phonics, written vocabulary, written comprehension, oral reading, and language skills. The program, by design, not only improves reading skills required for language arts classes, but also helps students in other academic areas where reading comprehension is important, such as social studies and science. When the students' reading skills improve, their self-confidence and self-esteem also improve. In Orange County, a total of 242 students have successfully completed the reading program. In 2011 alone, the average grade level increase in comprehension and vocabulary was 2.48, and in oral/receptive vocabulary, the average age level increase was 2.32 years. There was also a grade level increase of 1.76 in written language skills, such as grammar. In Osceola, 32 students benefited from this program, which commenced in 2009 thanks to a BYRNE/JAG Grant. It is also supervised under the Alternative Sanctions Program. For more information on the



Orange County Program, call **407-836-9313** and in Osceola County, call **407-742-2518**.



Speakers Bureau -- As part of the Ninth Circuit's community outreach efforts, a Speakers Bureau was established to make the courts user-friendly, and to enhance the public's perception and understanding of the court's role in the community. Members of

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the judiciary and Court Administration staff are available to speak to schools and community groups on various topics of interest. Courts are able to provide insight into how civil and criminal cases proceed through the court system and how conflicts are resolved. Judges are available to speak on topics such as alternative dispute resolution, landlord/tenant issues, small claims, court technology, family law, jury service, the juvenile justice system, and the civil and criminal justice system. To request a speaker, call **407-836-0403**.

Staff Attorney Department -- Staff attorneys provide integral support to the judiciary by researching complex legal questions on pre-trial, trial and post-trial issues which arise in all divisions of the court. They also assist the judges with a variety of other matters, such as appeals, writs, post-conviction motions, and capital cases. They prepare written memoranda in some cases and in others report directly to the judges, either in person or via e-mail. They regularly draft proposed orders and appellate opinions for the judges' review and approval. The staff attorney program greatly increases the efficiency of court operations by providing the judges more time to devote to hearings and trials and by ensuring that difficult questions of law are thoroughly researched. In 2011, the staff attorneys researched and prepared memoranda/proposed orders in 250 appellate cases, 850 post-conviction matters, and countless other cases in all areas of the law.



Technology Services -- The Department of Technology Services provides comprehensive computer support for the court's 65 judges, 65 judicial assistants, and 197 employees, who are housed in 7 court facilities located throughout the Ninth Judicial Circuit. Services include the following:



- Application development
- Audio/visual design, maintenance, and support
- Computer maintenance and support
- Courtroom technology
- Database administration
- Digital court reporting
- Evidence presentation systems
- Fiber installation
- Internet maintenance and support
- Public wireless Internet access
- Systems administration
- Training
- Video conference
- Web page development, maintenance, and support

To reach Technology Services, please call **407-836-6010** for Orange County or **407-742-2530** for Osceola County.

Teen Court -- Teen Court is a diversionary program for first-time juvenile offenders who are tried and sentenced by their peers. Teen Court's purpose is to divert less serious cases away from the more formal juvenile court. Teen Court is based on the premise

that youthful offenders will more readily accept responsibility for their actions when judged and sentenced by teens their own age. Teenage volunteers, acting as prosecutors, defense attorneys, deputies, clerks, and jurors run the program. The judge is the only adult participant in the proceedings. To be eligible for Teen Court, participants must admit guilt to their non-violent misdemeanor



or felony charges. The jury determines an appropriate sentence, which may include community service, a jail tour, drug testing, abiding by a curfew, serving on a Teen Court jury, making restitution, writing a report, or verbal or written apologies to victims or parents. All Osceola County defendants are required to attend a life skills class taught by the Osceola County Health Department and all defendants are required to submit to random drug tests. If the sentence is completed, the original charge is dismissed; if not, the case is turned over to Juvenile Court. Judges and attorneys volunteer time to preside over the hearings. The Orange County program handled 1,093 criminal cases in 2010-2011 and has 498 teen volunteers. The Osceola County program handled 458 criminal cases in 2011, and its adult/teen volunteers donated a total of 6,095 hours of community service. Volunteers in Orange County Teen Court earn one-half a high school credit for working 75 hours in a school year and qualify for the Thomas S. Kirk Teen Court Scholarship. For Orange County, call **407-836-9517** or send an e-mail to teenc@ocnjcc.org. In Osceola County, call **407-742-2465** or send an email to ctadam1@ocnjcc.org.

Tours -- Court Administration provides limited organized tours of the Orange and Osceola County courthouses to schools, community organizations, and the general public. A written tour guide provides a floor-by-floor directory. The court also offers virtual tours of the Orange County Courthouse via its website. Tour stops generally include the rotunda, the jury assembly room, courtrooms, judicial chambers, the judicial conference room, and the computer room. The highlight of the tour is a stop in the court's high-tech courtroom. To schedule a tour, please visit the court's website and complete an online request form at www.ninthcircuit.org. For additional information regarding tours of the Orange County Courthouses, call **407-836-2380**. For additional information regarding tours of the Osceola County Courthouse, please call **407-742-2415**.



Town Hall Meetings -- Town hall meetings provide an opportunity for judges and citizens to meet and openly discuss concerns and issues regarding our judicial system. The meetings are generally held at a church or community center, and typically target a specific section of the community. These events not only offer citizens an opportunity to meet the judges and learn about our judicial system, they also serve as a forum for judges to better understand the needs of the community and the perceptions people have of the courts. Town hall agendas usually include question-and-answer sessions, panel

Programs / Services

discussions, a meet-and-greet opportunity, and a “get to know your legal community” fair, with booths from local community assistance and legal organizations. For information on upcoming Town Hall Meetings, call **407-836-0403**.


Truancy Court -- In July of 2004, the Florida Legislature provided funding for a statewide magistrate system. Following implementation of a Magistrate Division in the Ninth Circuit, a general magistrate was assigned to assist the circuit judges sitting in the Juvenile Division of the court. In the Ninth Circuit, one responsibility of this general magistrate is to conduct Truancy Court each Wednesday during normal business hours at the Thomas S. Kirk Juvenile Justice Center. In 2011, the general magistrate’s docket reflected that Truancy Court carried out 960 truancy hearings. An additional program designed to focus on schools in our community which have the highest truancy rates is held on Thursday evening beginning at 5:00 p.m., and is presided over by a special magistrate. This is referred to as Community-Based Truancy Court (CBTC). CBTC’s docket reflects that they conducted 201 hearings in 2011. Case management for both Truancy Courts is provided by two case managers who are supervised by the Juvenile Justice Coordinator, under Court Administration. Both the daytime and evening Truancy Courts provide students and their families with information and directions for services, as well as timely intervention. Sanctions can be imposed for noncompliance, and cases can be referred to a Judge under certain circumstances. For information on Truancy Courts, call Juvenile Court Administration at **407-836-7590** press “2” then press “4”.



all open cases involving the parties. The UFC’s case managers also oversee parties’ compliance with court orders and provide litigants with information about community resources available to them. For more information, call **407-742-2531**.

Volunteer Program -- The Ninth Judicial Circuit’s Volunteer Program is committed to promoting community awareness of and involvement in the judicial system. The court acknowledges the value of community support and its role in a fair and effective judicial system. Court volunteers save taxpayers thousands of dollars each year through their service. Court volunteers work in the information booths at the courthouses, as well as various departments in Orange and Osceola counties. Volunteers may also assist with numerous court programs, such as Teen Court, the Neighborhood Restorative Justice Program and mediation programs. In Orange County, volunteers donated more than 2,960 hours of their time in 2011, resulting in a cost savings of \$43,000. In Osceola, volunteers donated over 800 hours of their time as well, which amounted to a cost savings of \$12,000. To volunteer in Orange County call **407-836-2052** and in Osceola County call **407-742-2415**.



 **Twitter –** Social media’s growing popularity and widespread acceptance prompted the Ninth Judicial Circuit to expand its public information services to include the use of Twitter. The endeavor has been a success, and by mid-2011 the Circuit had over 1,000 followers. The Court routinely sends out tweets on recent news events, including press releases, information on high-profile cases, court closings, and judicial appointments. Log on to Twitter.com and follow **@NinthCircuitFL** if you would like to receive these up-to-date tweets.

Unified Family Court (Osceola) - The Unified Family Court (UFC) uses a fully integrated, comprehensive approach to handle all cases involving children, families, and victims of domestic violence, while resolving family disputes in a fair, timely, efficient and cost-effective manner. Since January of 2006, the UFC has assigned two judges to handle all family and juvenile cases on an alternating week basis using a mirror image procedure. The goal is to have all companion cases linked together and assigned to one judge so that the presiding judge can have a complete overview of all the cases pertaining to an entire family. Additionally, case managers research approximately 10,749 cases per year and reassign/notify the presiding judge of any and



For more information about the Ninth Judicial Circuit, please visit our award-winning website at

NinthCircuit.org

Follow us on Twitter.



