

**ORDER GOVERNING PROCEDURES FOR PRO SE LITIGANTS IN THE  
DOMESTIC RELATIONS DIVISION, ORANGE COUNTY**

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Article V, section 2(d) of the Florida Constitution and section 43.26, Florida Statutes, the chief judge of each judicial circuit is charged with the authority and the power to do everything necessary to promote the prompt and efficient administration of justice; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to the chief judge's constitutional and statutory responsibility for administrative supervision of the courts within the circuit and to create and maintain an organization capable of effecting the efficient, prompt, and proper administration of justice for the citizens of this State, the chief judge is required to exercise direction, *see* Fla. R. Jud. Admin. 2.215(b)(2), (b)(3); and

**WHEREAS**, the Circuit Court in Orange County is concerned with the effective and proper administration of domestic relations cases filed by pro se litigants in the Domestic Relations Division; and

**WHEREAS**, it has been determined that a Family Court Case Management (FCCM) Department is necessary to assist pro se litigants who file domestic relations cases in the Domestic Relations Division; and

**WHEREAS**, such assistance by the FCCM Department will expedite domestic relations cases filed by pro se litigants, thereby providing greater convenience to these pro se litigants;

**NOW, THEREFORE, I**, Frederick J. Lauten, in order to facilitate the efficient operation of the administration of justice, and pursuant to the authority vested in me as Chief Judge of the Ninth Judicial Circuit of Florida under Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.215, hereby

order the following, **effective immediately for all pro se litigants who file a dissolution of marriage, name change, paternity, or temporary/concurrent custody by extended family member case**, to continue until further order and superseding any provisions in prior Administrative Orders which may be inconsistent:

The following procedures are adopted for all pro se litigants filing a dissolution of marriage case, a name change case, a paternity case, or a temporary/concurrent custody by extended family member case in the Domestic Relations Division.

1. Registering with FCCM:
  - a. Prior to filing a dissolution of marriage, name change, paternity, or temporary/concurrent custody by an extended family member case in the Domestic Relations Division, all pro se litigants must register with the FCCM Department located in room 330. All registered cases must be stamped by a FCCM Department case manager prior to filing with the Clerk of Court.
  - b. A thorough review will be conducted by the FCCM Department to ensure accuracy and completeness of all required documents. Pursuant to this Administrative Order, family court case managers are permitted to notarize accurate and thorough Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law forms, and “approved forms” under Florida Family Law Rule of Procedure 12.750(b)(5).
  - c. The FCCM Department will provide limited assistance to pro se litigants within the bounds of Florida Family Law Rule of Procedure 12.750.
2. Scheduling of Uncontested Final Hearings:
  - a. All final hearings for uncontested dissolution of marriage, name change, paternity, or temporary/concurrent custody by extended family member cases in the Domestic Relations Division, for which both litigants, or at minimum the petitioner is representing himself/herself, will be coordinated by the FCCM Department case managers.
  - b. Upon belief by the pro se litigant that the case is ready to be set for final hearing, the pro se litigant must notify their assigned FCCM Department case manager. Upon such notification, the case manager will review the court file prior to scheduling the final hearing.
  - c. All required documents must be filed with the Clerk of Court, Domestic Relations Division before any hearing will be scheduled.

3. Referring to Mediation:

- a. All contested dissolution of marriage, paternity, and temporary/concurrent custody by extended family cases in which all litigants are representing themselves and their disagreement involves distribution of property, alimony, and/or primary parental responsibility, or visitation and/or support of the minor child(ren), must be referred to the court-annexed Dispute Resolution Services family mediation prior to setting a final hearing or trial.
- b. The parties may not be referred to mediation if there is a history of domestic violence except by court order.

4. Vacating Administrative Order:

- a. Administrative Order 07-94-53 is vacated and set aside except to the extent that it has been incorporated and/or amended herein. Vacating an Administrative Order that vacates a prior Order does not revive the prior Order.

**DONE AND ORDERED** at Orlando, Florida, this 16<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2017.

\_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_  
Frederick J. Lauten  
Chief Judge

Copies provided to:

Clerk of Courts, Orange County  
Clerk of Courts, Osceola County  
General E-Mail Distribution List  
<http://www.ninthcircuit.org>