

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ATTORNEYS
RE: PINELLAS CIRCUIT CIVIL CASE ASSIGNMENTS

4/24/15

Pursuant to Administrative Order 2015-018 PI-CIR, the Court is closing circuit civil Section 33 (mortgage foreclosure section) and reopening circuit civil Section 20 in Clearwater effective July 1, 2015.

As a result, some open cases will need to be reassigned from circuit civil sections 7, 15, 21, and 33 to repopulate Section 20. Cases in Section 33 that are in a “reopened” posture will be assigned to the four St. Petersburg circuit civil sections (8, 11, 13, and 19). The reassignments were made on April 10th; however, the new assignments will not go into effect until July 1, 2015.

Hearings that are currently scheduled between now and June 30, 2015, will remain scheduled in the current section. If you need to set a hearing, or cancel or reschedule a hearing before July 1, 2015, please contact the office of the judge of the section to which the case is **currently** assigned.

If you currently have a case assigned to Sections 7, 15, 21 or 33 and you need to set a hearing on July 1, 2015 or later, please check the On-line Attorney Access system to determine whether or not the case has been reassigned to a new section effective July 1st. The Clerk of Court will not be mailing individual notices of case reassignments; you must check the On-line Attorney Access system to determine the status of your case assignment effective July 1, 2015.

If you check the On-line Attorney Access system and determine that your case has been reassigned to Section 20 as of July 1, 2015, and you need to set a hearing for July 1, 2015 or later, please contact Section20@jud6.org to request a hearing date.

If you check the On-line Attorney Access system and determine that your Section 33 case has been reassigned to one of the Clearwater circuit civil sections (7, 15 or 21) as of July 1, and you need to set a hearing for July 1 or later, please contact the office of the judge of the section to which the case **will be assigned** as of July 1st.

If you check the On-line Attorney Access system and determine that your reopened Section 33 case has been reassigned to one of the St. Petersburg circuit civil sections (8, 11, 13, and 19) as of July 1, and you need to set a hearing for July 1 or later, please contact the office of the judge of the section to which the case **will be assigned** as of July 1st.

Uncontested Motions for Summary Judgment and Non-Jury Trial in foreclosure cases filed *before* January 1, 2013, will continue to be scheduled on separate calendars to be heard by senior or sitting judges. Please follow the procedures for those cases listed on the foreclosure page of our website.

All Motions for Summary Judgment and Non-Jury Trial in foreclosure cases filed *on or after* January 1, 2013, are to be heard by the assigned section judge as indicated above, and will not be heard on a senior judge calendar.

Thank you for your cooperation and patience.

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT, SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR PASCO AND PINELLAS COUNTIES, FLORIDA**

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 2015-018 PI-CIR

RE: ASSIGNMENT OF CIRCUIT CIVIL CASES IN PINELLAS COUNTY – REVISED DUE TO CLOSURE OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SECTION

Residential mortgage foreclosure case filings remain relatively high and the backlog of pending mortgage foreclosure cases in the Sixth Judicial Circuit is significant. Still, beginning July 1, 2015, the Court is losing resources that it had received from the joint State-federal mortgage servicing settlement. Consequently, the Court is closing circuit civil section 33, the mortgage foreclosure section in Pinellas County, and reassigning circuit civil cases to section 20.

In accordance with Article V, section 2, Florida Constitution, Rule of Judicial Administration 2.215, and § 43.26, Florida Statutes, it is

ORDERED:

1. On April 10, 2015, the Clerk of the Circuit Court in Pinellas County (Clerk) will select for assignment to circuit civil section 20 in Clearwater, using an equal, at random, blind assignment system, one of every four presently open cases in circuit civil sections 7, 15, and 21 in Clearwater (the selected cases) and provide a list of the selected cases to the Court. Through June 30, 2015, the judges assigned to sections 7, 15, and 21 shall continue to hear and try the selected cases. For trials and other matters planned to occur after June 30, 2015, attorneys or pro se parties must determine the prospective case assignment as noted in the Justice Consolidated Case Management System (Odyssey) and contact the prospective section judge for scheduling. On July 1, 2015, the Clerk will transfer the still open selected cases to section 20. The Clerk will assign any case filed in the Circuit Civil Division between April 10 and June 30, 2015, for assignment in a Clearwater civil section, to section 7, 15, or 21 in accordance with Administrative Order 2013-036; after July 1, 2015, such assigned cases will remain as initially assigned.

2. In order to provide for the closure of circuit civil section 33, on April 10, 2015:

- i. The Clerk will select for assignment to sections 7, 15, 20, and 21 in Clearwater, using an equal, at random, blind assignment system the *open* cases in section 33. Through June 30, 2015, the judge assigned to section 33 shall continue to hear and try the assigned cases, but shall not schedule any matters to occur after June 30, 2015. For trials and hearings planned to occur after June 30, 2015, attorneys or pro se parties must determine the prospective case assignment as noted in Odyssey and contact the prospective section judge for scheduling. On July 1, 2015, the Clerk will transfer from section 33 the still open cases to sections 7, 15, 20, and 21 in Clearwater.
- ii. The Clerk will select and assign to sections 8, 11, 13, and 19 in St. Petersburg, using an equal, at random, blind assignment system the current *reopened* cases in section 33. Through June 30, 2015, the judge assigned to section 33 shall continue to hear and try any matter already scheduled in the assigned cases, and shall hear other matters not already scheduled as her calendar permits. For trials and hearings planned to occur after June 30, 2015, attorneys or pro se parties must determine the case assignment as noted in Odyssey and contact the assigned section judge for scheduling.

3. After April 10, 2015, the Clerk will assign any closed case previously assigned to section 33 that reopens, to the appropriate Clearwater or St. Petersburg section as if it were a new case, either in accordance with Administrative Order 2013-036 if reopened before July 1, 2015, or in accordance with paragraph 8 or this Administrative Order if reopened on or after July 1, 2015.

4. In selecting cases for assignment under paragraphs 1, 2, and 3, the Clerk will consider existing recusal and disqualification orders that have been entered by the judges assigned to the applicable sections by Administrative Order 2015-014.

5. For the purposes of this Administrative Order an “open case” is one where the Court has not entered a final judgment or the case is not otherwise closed for SRS reporting purposes, and a “reopened case” is one designated as such by the Clerk.

6. As soon as practicable after July 1, 2015, the Administrative Office of the Courts shall provide to each Pinellas Circuit Civil Division judge, a listing of all cases assigned to his or her section.

7. No later than April 10, 2015, the Clerk is directed to take the following steps to provide notice of all cases to be assigned to a new section in accordance with paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Administrative Order:

- i. Post a notice on the Clerk’s website;
- ii. Send an e-mail notification through the local bar associations and the Fort Lauderdale Bar Association;
- iii. Provide hard copy notices at the Clerk’s counter;
- iv. Identify major law firms, both plaintiff and defense, and send email notification; and
- v. Make a docket entry and event coding in Odyssey that will alert parties of the new section assignments effective July 1, 2015.

8. Effective July 1, 2015, Paragraph 2 of Administrative Order 2012-029 is amended to read:

2. For the **Circuit Civil Division**, the Clerk of the Circuit Court in Pinellas County (Clerk) is directed to assign cases based upon the ZIP code of the plaintiff’s attorney or if the plaintiff is unrepresented, the ZIP code of the plaintiff, except as provided in this Administrative Order.

- i. Cases filed in Pinellas County from the following Pasco and Pinellas County ZIP codes are to be assigned using an equal, at random, blind assignment system to section 7, 15, 20, and 21 in Clearwater so that each section is assigned essentially the same number of new cases:

33755; 33756; 33757; 33758; 33759; 33760; 33761; 33762; 33763; 33764; 33765;
33766; 33767; 33770; 33771; 33774; 33775; 33778; 33779; 33785; 33786; 34660;
34677; 34681; 34682; 34683; 34684; 34685; 34688; 34689; 34695; 34697; 34698;
33540; 33541; 33542; 33543; 33544; 33545; 33523; 33524; 33525; 33526; 33537;
33539; 33549; 33559; 33574; 33576; 33593; 33597; 33849; 33549; 33548; 33556;
33558; 34610; 34637; 34638; 34639; 34652; 34653; 34654; 34655; 34656; 34667;
34668; 34669; 34673; 34674; 34679; 34680; 34690; 34691

- ii. Cases filed in Pinellas County from the following Pinellas County ZIP codes are to be assigned using an equal, at random, blind assignment system to sections 8, 11, 13, and 19 in St. Petersburg so that each section is assigned essentially the same number of new cases:

33701; 33702; 33703; 33704; 33705; 33706; 33707; 33708; 33709; 33710;
33711; 33712; 33713; 33714; 33715; 33716; 33730; 33731; 33732; 33733;
33734; 33736; 33737; 33738; 33740; 33741; 33742; 33743; 33744; 33772;
33773; 33776; 33777; 33780; 33781; 33782; 33784

- iii. Cases filed under § 394.910 et. seq., Fla. Stat. (Jimmy Ryce) are to all be assigned to section 60.
- iv. Cases filed under § 932.704, Fla. Stat. (civil forfeiture) are to all be assigned to section 001.
- v. Petitions for a writ of habeas corpus filed in the circuit civil division are to all be assigned to section 77 except:

- a) Petitions for a writ of habeas corpus filed in the appellate division of the circuit court shall be assigned to the section for the appellate administrative judge;
 - b) Petitions for a writ of habeas corpus arising from a probate matter are to be assigned to the section for the probate administrative judge; and
 - c) Petitions for a writ of habeas corpus arising from a juvenile dependency or delinquency matter are to be assigned to the section for the Unified Family Court administrative judge.
- vi. Cases will be assigned to section 77 (Chief Judge civil section) and 78 (senior judge civil section) as directed by the Chief Judge.
 - vii. Cases transferred from county court to circuit court when a claim or counterclaim exceeds the jurisdiction of the county court shall be assigned to Circuit Civil Section 91N for Clearwater County Civil and Small Claims sections or Circuit Civil Section 91S for St. Petersburg County Civil and Small Claims section.
 - viii. Unless otherwise provided for in this Administrative Order, cases with an out of county ZIP code, an unknown ZIP code, or a ZIP code not listed in this Administrative Order are to be assigned in a manner that results in an even distribution of the cases among all civil sections in Clearwater and St. Petersburg.
 - viii. The Administrative Office of the Courts will review the case distribution at least semi-annually and as needed adjust the percentage of cases with out of county ZIP codes, unknown ZIP codes or a ZIP code not listed in this Administrative Order that are to be assigned to Clearwater sections and St. Petersburg sections in order to equalize the workload.

Effective July 1, 2015, Administrative Order 2013-036 is rescinded. All other terms and conditions of Administrative Order 2012-029 not in conflict with this Administrative Order remain in full force and effect.

DONE AND ORDERED in Chambers, Clearwater, Pinellas County, Florida, this ____ day of March, 2015.

ORIGINAL SIGNED ON MARCH 30, 2015
BY ANTHONY RONDOLINO, ACTING CHIEF JUDGE

- cc: All Pinellas Judges
 The Honorable Bernie McCabe, State Attorney
 The Honorable Bob Dillinger, Public Defender
 The Honorable Ken Burke, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Pinellas County
 Gay Inskip, Trial Courts Administrator
 Ngozi Acholonu, Assistant Regional Counsel
 Myriam Irizarry, Chief Deputy Director, Pinellas County Clerk's Office
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 Law Libraries, Pasco and Pinellas Counties

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