



For Immediate Release
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20th Circuit Implements New Case Management System for Civil Cases In Lee and Collier Counties

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On January 1, 2011 the Twentieth Judicial Circuit, Lee and Collier Counties, implemented a Differentiated Case Management (DCM) system for managing civil cases. Circuit Administrative Judges in consultation with civil judges and local Bar Associations developed plans for the reduction of backlogged civil cases and procedures for the management of all future civil cases. As in Felony Differentiated Case Management which was implemented in 2008 the DCM system will set cases on one of three case management “tracks” based on case complexity. Each track has a pretrial scheduling plan with timelines for completion of discovery and target dates for court events and case disposition.

By establishing timelines for case progression early disposition of appropriate cases can be accomplished while more complex cases can be given sufficient time for preparation and individual judicial management prior to trial. The procedures will establish time certain pretrial schedules, set deadlines, and, conserve and better utilize court resources. The goal is to improve early management of civil cases and to set reasonable time schedules for pretrial events, discovery and trial based upon the individual needs of a case.

The caseflow management plan for circuit civil cases is being implemented to accomplish the following goals:

- Improve the courts ability to provide early and continuous control of case processing through use of additional Magistrate and Case Management resources, to ensure fair and prompt resolution of disputes
- Identify immediate strategies for civil case backlog reduction ----prompt resolution of 31% civil cases pending over 18 months.
- Improve the courts ability to respond to the growing number of commercial, business and other economic based civil filings having a direct impact on economic recovery in the circuit
- Develop uniform procedures for effective early judicial intervention and management of complex litigation

- Reduce public costs of civil litigation through early identification and expedited handling of relatively simple two-party cases to ensure prompt resolution of expedited matters through early referral to mediation or expedited hearing where appropriate
- Improve the quality and timeliness of management information from the Clerk/Court MIS systems to assist judges and the court in management of civil cases and identification of cases pending beyond the Florida Supreme Court time standards.

The time standards established by case track are:

- Complex cases - 80% disposed within 24 months
- Standard cases - 80% disposed within 18 months
- Expedited cases - 90% disposed within 12 months

Preliminary case backlog reduction efforts implemented in July 2010 in Civil and Foreclosure cases have already had significant impact in reducing older cases in all five counties in the circuit.

To view the Differentiated Case Management Program Page, [click here](#).

To view Administrative Order 1.13, [click here](#).

The additional civil case management procedures that went into effect on 1/1/2011 are expected to further expedite civil case resolution in the circuit. The civil case management system being piloted in Lee and Collier Counties will be expanded to Charlotte, Glades and Hendry Counties as appropriate based on local needs, resources and filing trends.