

COURT COMMITTEES

Court Committees

Although the Florida State Courts System is administered by the chief justice and the other supreme court justices, the policy development strategy of the judicial branch is, in many regards, highly synergistic. Committees—whose membership generally comprises judges and court personnel, and may include justice partners and topic experts as well—are the means established by the supreme court for gathering input on judicial branch policies affecting the administration of justice.

The supreme court may appoint a committee when a specific issue or concern is brought to its attention or when it seeks to evaluate and improve the courts system's performance in a particular area, for instance. Committees usually receive their authority and directive through an administrative order of the chief justice. While most committees have no direct policy-making authority, they do play an important advisory role and make recommendations for consideration by the supreme court.

Court committees serve a vital function in the judicial branch, and, through their appointment, the branch benefits from the rich intellectual, experiential, social, and personal background of each member.

Under the current court committee structure, the supreme court utilizes five different types of committees: councils, commissions, steering committees, workgroups/task forces, and other committees. Below is information about the supreme court committees that are staffed entirely or in part by the Office of the State Courts Administrator.

Councils

A council is responsible for addressing judicial administration issues that have statewide impact, affect multiple levels of the court system, or affect multiple constituencies in the court community. Council membership includes internal and external representation.

The Judicial Management Council (JMC), chaired by Chief Justice Jorge Labarga, serves as a focused advisory body to assist the chief justice and supreme court in identifying trends, potential crisis situations, and the means to address them. For more information, see [Florida Rule of Judicial Administration](#) 2.225, [AOSC16-30](#), and the [Short History of Florida State Courts System Processes, Programs, and Initiatives](#).

Commissions

A commission addresses high-level policy issues that span the divisions and/or levels of the court. Membership of court commissions primarily consists of judicial officers and court personnel.

The District Court of Appeal Budget Commission (DCABC), chaired by Judge Jonathan Gerber, Fourth DCA, oversees the preparation and implementation of the district court component of the judicial branch budget; it is directly responsible for recommending budgeting and funding policies and procedures for the district court budgets so that the funding requirements of each DCA can be adequately addressed while promoting statewide operational consistency. For more information, see [Florida Rule of Judicial Administration](#) 2.235 and [AOSC16-67](#).

The Trial Court Budget Commission (TCBC), chaired by Judge Margaret Steinbeck, Twentieth Circuit, oversees the preparation and implementation of the trial court component of the judicial branch budget; it is directly responsible for recommending budgeting and funding policies and procedures for the trial court budgets in order to support a trial court system that will effectively carry out the administration of justice. For more information, see [Florida Rule of Judicial Administration](#) 2.230 and [AOSC16-29](#).

[The Commission on District Court of Appeal Performance and Accountability](#) (DCAP&A), chaired by Judge Vance Salter, Third DCA, proposes policies and procedures on matters related to the efficient and effective functioning of Florida's district courts through the development of comprehensive resource management, performance measurement, and accountability programs. For more information, see [AOSC16-32](#).

[The Commission on Trial Court Performance and Accountability](#) (TCP&A), chaired by Judge Diana Moreland, Twelfth Circuit, proposes policies and procedures on matters related to the efficient and effective functioning of Florida's trial courts through the development of comprehensive resource management, performance measurement, and accountability programs. For more information, see [AOSC16-39](#).

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[The Florida Courts Technology Commission](#) (FCTC), chaired by Judge Lisa Munyon, Ninth Circuit, oversees, manages, and directs the development and use of technology within the judicial branch under the direction of the Florida Supreme Court as specified in [Florida Rule of Judicial Administration](#) 2.236.

[The Florida Commission on Access to Civil Justice](#), chaired by Chief Justice Jorge Labarga, was established to study the remaining unmet civil legal needs of disadvantaged, low income, and moderate income Floridians. It “bring[s] together the three branches of government, the Bar, civil legal aid providers, the business community, and other well-known stakeholders in a coordinated effort to identify and remove...economic barriers to civil justice.” For more information, see [AOSC14-65](#) and [AOSC16-71](#) as well as the [Short History of Florida State Courts System Processes, Programs, and Initiatives](#).

The Florida Court Education Council (FCEC), chaired by Chief Justice Jorge Labarga, oversees the development and maintenance of a comprehensive educational program for Florida judges and certain court personnel groups. The council’s responsibilities include making budgetary, programmatic, and policy recommendations to the supreme court regarding continuing education for Florida judges and certain court professionals. For more information, see [AOSC16-42](#) and [section 25.384, Florida Statutes](#).

The Committee on Alternative Dispute Resolution Rules and Policy, chaired by Judge Rodney Smith, Eleventh Circuit, assists the supreme court in exercising its power and performing its duties to establish rules of practice and procedure for court-ordered mediation and arbitration. For more information, see [AOSC16-40](#).

Steering Committees

A steering committee represents the interests of a particular court division. Steering committees develop an aspirational vision of the ideal court division; recommend models, standards, and best practices; and conduct court improvement initiatives. Steering committees also address the impact on their topical assignment area of new legislation, case law, federal guidelines, and other changes.

The Steering Committee on Families and Children in the Court (FCC), chaired by Judge Christine Greider, Twentieth Circuit, seeks to establish a fully integrated, comprehensive approach to handling all cases involving children and families; it works to encourage and facilitate improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of family court operations. For more information, see [AOSC16-46](#).

The Criminal Court Steering Committee, chaired by Judge James Hankinson, Second Circuit, develops consistent and expedited recommendations to the supreme court regarding changes required by legislative enactments, judicial decisions, or other events or circumstances involving criminal law matters. For more information, see [AOSC16-34](#).

Workgroups/Task Forces

A workgroup or task force is appointed to serve for a specific period of time or to address a specific topic or targeted issue. Workgroups and task forces conduct studies, prepare reports, and take other appropriate action as directed by the court.

The Unified Committee on Judicial Compensation, chaired by Chief Justice Jorge Labarga, serves as the court system’s mechanism for addressing and advancing judicial compensation and benefits issues; the committee develops and recommends to the supreme court judicial pay and benefits priorities and advocates for judicial pay and benefits issues approved by the court for inclusion in the judicial branch’s annual legislative budget request. For more information, see [Florida Rule of Judicial Administration](#) 2.224.

[The Task Force on Substance Abuse and Mental Health Issues in the Courts](#), chaired by Judge Steven Leifman, Miami-Dade County, addresses the needs of individuals with serious mental illnesses and substance abuse disorders who become involved in the justice system. For more information, see [AOSC16-44](#).

[The Standing Committee on Fairness and Diversity](#), chaired by Judge Peter Estrada, Twentieth Circuit, helps advance the state courts system’s efforts to eliminate from court operations bias that is based on race, gender, ethnicity, age, disability, financial status, or any characteristic that is without legal relevance. For more information, see [AOSC16-43](#).

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The Appellate Court Technology Committee, chaired by Judge Stevan Northcutt, Second DCA, is a standing committee of the Florida Courts Technology Commission; it provides technical guidance and consultation to the commission regarding information systems development and operational policies and procedures relating to automation in the district courts of appeal. For more information, see [Florida Rule of Judicial Administration](#) 2.236 and [AOSC16-38](#).

The Electronic Florida Appellate Courts Technology Solution (eFACTS) Change Advisory Board, chaired by Justice Ricky Polston, assists the supreme court in facilitating the continued and timely implementation of eFACTS. For more information, see [AOSC14-16](#).

The Task Force on Appellate Court Safety and Security, chaired by Marshal Silvester Dawson, Florida Supreme Court, develops proposed standards and best practices relating to safety and security of the supreme court and district courts of appeal. For more information, see [AOSC16-45](#).

Other Committees

This category encompasses committees required by supreme court opinion, statutory provisions, or other requirements; by reason of their regulatory or other responsibilities, these entities may operate more independently from court oversight than the other kinds of committees.

The Committee on Standard Jury Instructions in Criminal Cases, chaired by Judge Jerri Collins, Eighteenth Circuit, makes recommendations to the supreme court regarding changes that are required in jury instructions in criminal cases; these changes are in response to legislative enactments, judicial decisions, or other events or circumstances that affect the presentation of cases to trial juries. The committee also reviews the standard instructions for errors and inaccuracies and recommends to the court amendments and revisions that would be beneficial to the administration of justice [Authority: 327 So. 2d 6 (Fla. 1976)].

The Judicial Ethics Advisory Committee, chaired by Judge Spencer Levine, Fourth DCA, renders written advisory opinions to inquiring judges concerning the propriety of contemplated judicial and non-judicial conduct. [Authority: 327 So. 2d 5 (Fla. 1976)]

The Mediation Qualifications Discipline and Review Board is responsible for accepting grievances against certified mediators; determining probable cause with regard to grievances filed against certified mediators; conducting hearings in relation to grievance proceedings, if necessary; and sanctioning certified mediators, if appropriate. The board includes judges, county mediators, family mediators, circuit mediators, dependency mediators, and attorneys. For more information, see [Florida Rule for Certified and Court-Appointed Mediators](#) 10.730.

The Mediation Training Review Board is responsible for reviewing complaints filed against certified mediation training programs. Members include judges and county, family, circuit, and dependency mediators. For more information, see [OSC13-41](#).

The Mediator Ethics Advisory Committee, chaired by Ms Susan Dubow, provides written advisory opinions to mediators concerning interpretations of the rules and guidance on standards of conduct. For more information, see [Florida Rule for Certified and Court-Appointed Mediators](#) 10.900(a).

The Parenting Coordinator Disciplinary Review Board considers complaints against qualified and court-appointed parenting coordinators. Membership includes judges, attorneys, and parenting coordinators from across the state. For more information, see [AOSC16-95](#).

The Court Interpreter Certification Board, chaired by Judge Kevin Abdoney, Polk County, assists the supreme court in overseeing the certification and regulation of court interpreters. For more information, see [Florida Rule for Certification and Regulation of Spoken Language Court Interpreters](#) 14.100.

The Local Rule Advisory Committee, chaired by Judge Ross Bilbrey, First DCA, makes recommendations to the supreme court concerning local rules and administrative orders submitted pursuant to [Florida Rule of Judicial Administration](#) 2.215(e).