

**Developing a Proposal for Differentiated Case Management for the  
Family Court of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit**

**Institute for Court Management  
Court Executive Development Program  
Phase III Project**

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## Abstract

The primary objective of this project is to research and develop a proposal for a Differentiated Case Management program for the Eleventh Judicial Circuit's Family Court. Since 1991, all circuits in Florida have been under a mandate by the Florida Supreme Court to establish a Family Court that would coordinate all family court matters that affect a single family. In its most recent decision In Re: Report of the Family Court Steering Committee, 26 Fla. L. Weekly S287 (Fla. 2001), the Florida Supreme Court specifically adopted the recommendations of the Family Court Steering Committee of establishing a "coordinated management" model in the Family Courts in Florida. This model includes the establishment of a differentiated case management system using either the concept of one family/one judge or one family/one team.

In developing a DCM system for the Eleventh Judicial Circuit's Family Court, there are four questions that I will address: 1) What goals and objectives will we achieve by establishing a DCM System in our Family Court? 2) What are the current caseload characteristics and how are current cases being disposed of? 3) What are the specific case flow problems that need to be addressed? and 4) What is the appropriate DCM model for the Eleventh Judicial Circuit's Family Court?

Two research methods were employed to answer the questions listed above. A data collection survey was developed and sent to courts throughout the United States to ascertain whether they use a formal or informal DCM system in their Family Courts. The surveys response provide useful information to be used as we develop goals and objectives for our own DCM system and determine the best practices in Differentiated Case Management in Family Courts. Second, the caseloads of two Family Division Sections of our Circuit were reviewed to

determine the current caseload characteristics and identify any specific caseload problems. This information from the caseload study will provide assistance in developing and proposing the criteria for case differential, proposing a method of screening cases, determining DCM track characteristics and developing a method for monitoring and evaluation of the proposed DCM model for our Family Court.

The current Family Court case management system focuses on reducing backlog, ensuring compliance with court orders and monitoring compliance of self-represented litigants with documentation requirements. From studies of other Unified Family Court systems, we have learned principles and values of differentiated case management, coordination of cases with overlapping issues, and the value of appropriate referrals and monitoring of parties' compliance. However, full implementation has been limited due to insufficient staff and inadequate technology. To complicate matters even more, the Eleventh Judicial Circuit has three separate divisions that handle the type of cases enumerated in the most recent Florida Supreme Court's decision. Because of geographic location of courthouses and availability of resources, our circuit has not been able to "unify" these divisions administratively. The Eleventh Judicial Circuit is faced with the challenge of improving case process while responding to the continued challenge of decreasing resources and timely resolution of increased cases loads. Establishing a DCM System for our Family Court will play a vital role in reorganization and the possibility of consolidating resources within the three divisions.

As a result of this research project, a proposal for a Differentiated Case Management System for the Eleventh Judicial Circuit's Family Division was developed. Using the information derived from the caseload study and the data collection survey, criteria for case differential, protocols for screening and reviewing cases, DCM track characteristics and a

method for monitoring and evaluating the proposed DCM model for our Family Court were developed. The proposed DCM system would address the inefficiency of our circuit's current case flow. Full implementation of this system with the appropriate resources and the initial intake process when the case is filed will accomplish timely disposition of cases consistent with the circumstances of each case, enhance the quality of the services our court provides to litigants and enable the just and efficient resolution of cases by improving system resources.

## **Developing a Proposal for Differentiated Case Management for the Family Court of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit**

### **Introduction**

Since 1991, all circuits in Florida have been under a mandate by the Florida Supreme Court to establish a Family Court that coordinates all family court matters that affect a single family.<sup>1</sup> In its most recent decision In Re: Report of the Family Court Steering Committee, 26 Fla. L. Weekly S287 (Fla. 2001), the Florida Supreme Court specifically adopted the recommendations of the Family Court Steering Committee to establish a “coordinated management” model in the Family Courts in Florida. This model includes the establishment of a differentiated case management system using either the concept of one family/one judge or one family/one team.<sup>2</sup> The primary objective of this project is to research and develop a proposal for a Differentiated Case Management program for the Eleventh Judicial Circuit’s Family Court.

Differentiated Case Management (DCM) is a case flow management technique used to tailor the process and the allocation of resources to the needs of individual cases.<sup>3</sup> This type of managing case progress recognizes that individual cases require different amounts of time and resources for a fair and timely disposition. Goals of timeliness and fairness are most likely achieved when courts actively supervise the progress of each case from filing to disposition.<sup>4</sup> Numerous courts in the United States have effectively used DCM in their efforts to reduce delay,

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<sup>1</sup> In Re: Report of Commission on Family Courts, 588 So.2d 586, 591 (Fla. 1991). (Family Courts I).

<sup>2</sup> In Re: Report of the Family Court Steering Committee, 26 Fla. Law Weekly S287, S290 (Fla. 2001).

<sup>3</sup> Carolyn Cooper, Maureen Solomon and Holly Bekke. Bureau of Justice Assistance Differentiated Case Management Implementation Manual. (June 1993) 1. *See Also* Holly Bekke and Maureen Solomon. “Case Differentiation: An Approach to Individualized Case Management.” Judicature 73.1 (June-July 1989): 17-21.

<sup>4</sup> Holly Bakke and Maureen Solomon. “Case Differentiation: An Approach to Individualized Case Management.” Judicature 73.1 (June-July 1989): 17.

assure equal access to court services and resolve cases justly and efficiently.<sup>5</sup> DCM was first applied to Unified Family Courts around the mid 1990's.<sup>6</sup> Expected benefits associated with the implementation of DCM within Unified Family Courts include greater scheduling certainty, more efficient use of court resources, reduction of the time of disposition in most cases, increased coordination and cooperation among the courts and agencies involved in the case, improvement of the quality of the judicial process and enhancement of the respect and credibility of the court.<sup>7</sup>

Currently, the Eleventh Judicial Circuit has three separate divisions that handle the type of cases enumerated in the most recent Florida Supreme Court's decision. These include the Family Division, the Juvenile Division and the Domestic Violence Division. The cases in the three separate divisions should be included in the Unified Family Court.<sup>8</sup> The Eleventh Judicial Circuit's "Family Division" handles dissolution of marriage, annulments, child custody, child support, name changes, termination of parental rights pending adoption, adoptions, paternities, URESA, modifications, enforcements and civil contempt that arise from these cases. The Eleventh Judicial Circuit's "Family Juvenile Division" handles juvenile dependency, juvenile delinquency, termination of parental rights, adoption arising out of termination of parental rights and children in need of services cases. The Eleventh Judicial Circuit's "Domestic Violence Division" handles domestic and repeat violence injunction cases, misdemeanor domestic violence cases and criminal violations of injunctions. Because of geographic location of courthouses and availability of resources, our circuit has not been able to "unify" these divisions administratively. However, the Circuit has established a year long Unified Family Court Pilot

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<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> Jeffrey A. Kuhn. "A Seven Year Lesson on Unified Family Courts: What We Have Learned Since the 1990 National Family Court Symposium." *Family Law Quarterly* 32.1 (Spring 1998): 71.

<sup>7</sup> Kuhn at 72. *See Also* Cooper at 4.

<sup>8</sup> In Re: Report of the Family Court Steering Committee, 26 Fla. L. Weekly at S289.

Project designed to test and recommend procedures for the coordination of cases involving members of the same family.<sup>9</sup> Having a DCM system in place will assist our Circuit by maximizing the use of resources available. It is more cost effective for our Circuit to look at consolidating resources, social services and administrative services for these three divisions in light of the major budget reduction our Circuit will face in the future.<sup>10</sup>

In developing a DCM system for the Eleventh Judicial Circuit's Family Court, there are four questions that this research will attempt to address: 1) What goals and objectives will we achieved by establishing a DCM System in our Family Court? 2) What are the current caseload characteristics and how are current cases being disposed of? 3) What specific case flow problems that need to be addressed? and 4) What is the appropriate DCM model for the Eleventh Judicial Circuit's Family Court?

Two research methods were employed to answer the questions listed above. A data collection survey was developed and sent to courts throughout the United States to ascertain whether they use a formal or informal DCM system in their Family Courts. The surveys responses provide useful information to be used as we develop goals and objectives for our own DCM system and to determine the best practices in Differentiated Case Management in Family Courts. Second, the caseloads of two Family Division Sections of our Circuit were reviewed to determine the current caseload characteristics and identify any specific caseload problems. This information from the caseload study will provide assistance in developing and proposing the criteria for case differential, proposing a method of screening cases, determining DCM track

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<sup>9</sup> See Eleventh Judicial Circuit Administrative Order 01-16.

<sup>10</sup> In 1998 Florida citizens voted for Constitutional Revision Seven of Article Five of the Florida Constitution that requires the State of Florida fully fund the State Court System by the year 2004. See Office of the State Courts Administrator, The Facts About CRC's Proposed Amendments to Article V of the Florida Constitution. Florida: June 1998.

characteristics and developing a method for monitoring and evaluation of the proposed DCM model for our Family Court.

The development of our family court has been a long and arduous process. In only ten years, the Eleventh Judicial Circuit has evolved from a court system with no specialized family court, where litigants were randomly assigned to general jurisdiction judges who had no knowledge or interest in family law, to a specialized family court that continues to evolve to meet the needs of our litigants as we embrace the concept of therapeutic justice. As previously noted, in 1991, the Supreme Court of Florida mandated the establishment of a Family Court in each of the circuits in Florida. The mandate was based on a report submitted to the Court by the Commission on Family Courts established by the Florida Legislature, to develop specific guidelines for the implementation of a Family Court within each circuit of Florida, to provide recommendations for statutory, rule and organizational changes and to recommend necessary support services.<sup>11</sup> In supporting the recommendations of the commission, the Supreme Court emphasized particularly their support for the commission's recommendation *that there be a means to assign all family court matters that affect one family to one judge.*<sup>12</sup>

In response to the 1991 Florida Supreme Court mandate, the Eleventh Judicial Circuit issued Administrative Order 91-47 on January 2, 1992. This Administrative Order established the Family Civil Department, which included Domestic Violence cases, and the Family Juvenile Department of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit Family Court. The Family Civil Department, which eventually would be called the Family Division, would handle dissolution of marriage, annulments, child custody and support, adoptions, paternity, modification proceeding, name changes, URESA and Domestic Violence cases. The Family Juvenile Department or Juvenile

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<sup>11</sup> Family Courts I, 588 So.2d at 587.

<sup>12</sup> *Id.* at 591.

Division would handle delinquency, dependency, children in need of services and families in need of services cases. In 1994, the Circuit submitted a Local Rule establishing the Domestic Violence Division of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit that would handle domestic violence injunction cases, repeat violence injunction cases, criminal misdemeanors involving domestic violence and criminal violations of injunctions.<sup>13</sup>

The Eleventh Judicial Circuit's initial plan for the Family Court proposed placing these three separate divisions under one administrative structure.<sup>14</sup> However, the initial plan was impeded because each division was physically located in three separate courthouses.<sup>15</sup> To ensure that the judiciary received adequate support from Court Administration, administrative staff and support services were individually developed for each of these Divisions in each of their respective courthouse.

The Florida Supreme Court identified the need for case management staff to screen, evaluate and manage cases through the system and help direct families at the point of initial contact with the judicial system to the appropriate judge, and/or to the appropriate judicial or community based service.<sup>16</sup> The Court also created the Family Court Steering Committee to advise the court on the progress of the circuits and to make recommendations on the characteristics of a model family court.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> See *Generally Family Courts II*. In 1994, the Supreme Court issued a second opinion to further refine and implement the family court divisions of the Florida courts. This second opinion emphasized that the goal of the family court was to establish a comprehensive approach in coordinating all judicial efforts in multiple cases that affected the same family. The Court affirmed that to better accomplish this goal in all circuits, a family's interaction with the courts should be administratively coordinated and monitored in one unified family division. The Court also stated that the trial courts must coordinate and maximize court resources in order to accomplish this goal.

<sup>14</sup> Sharon Denaro. "Family Division: A Proposed Family Court System and Budget." Eleventh Judicial Circuit, Administrative Office of the Courts, Miami-Dade County, Florida. (1991 amended May 12, 1994).

<sup>15</sup> In 1999, the Family and Domestic Violence Divisions were co-located in the Lawson E. Thomas Courthouse Center. Land was recently purchased within the vicinity of the Lawson E. Thomas Courthouse Center that will be use to build a new Juvenile Courthouse for the Eleventh Judicial Circuit.

<sup>16</sup> *Family Court II* at 16-17.

<sup>17</sup> *Id.* at 18-19.

The Eleventh Judicial Circuit recognizes the importance of active supervision of cases as an integral part of case flow management. Case Management Units were created in both the Domestic Violence and Family Division of the court. Case Managers were hired to ensure that cases move efficiently through the system, and that parties and attorneys comply with court orders, statutory requirements and local rule requirements. In addition to tracking and monitoring cases, the Case Managers assist the judiciary before, during and after hearings.

The initial plan for the Family Division in the Eleventh Judicial Circuit proposed what could be called the beginnings of a DCM system. The plan included a Central Intake office which would assess the needs of parties and direct the parties to the appropriate social service and community providers prior to filing.<sup>18</sup> In addition, upon filing of the case, the Intake office would fast track cases with children to mediation or other appropriate services and monitor compliance with court orders.<sup>19</sup> The Central Intake Office never came to fruition. However, throughout the years, the Family Division Case Managers have, through necessity, adopted many of the case management portions of the plan including some of the functions of the Intake unit.

In addition to the Supreme Court mandate, there are other reasons to establish DCM in our Family Court. In 1992, there were 47,772 combined filings in the Eleventh Judicial Circuit's Family, Juvenile and Domestic Violence Divisions.<sup>20</sup> In 2001 the number grew to 49,373 cases.<sup>21</sup> These numbers do not include post judgment modifications, contempt or enforcement actions. Because of the limitations of our current mainframe computer systems, which were developed for calendaring and docketing rather than case management, post judgment cases have

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<sup>18</sup> Denaro at 3-10.

<sup>19</sup> *Id.*

<sup>20</sup> Eleventh Judicial Circuit's Administrative Office of the Courts and Clerk's Office, Eleventh Judicial Circuit 1992 Annual Report, Miami-Dade County, 1992.

<sup>21</sup> Comparative Statistical Report January to December 2001, Eleventh Judicial Circuits Clerk's Office, January 2002.

never been accurately counted. Our circuit has estimated that there are an additional 8,000 post judgment matters filed per year in our Family Court.

Currently, the Eleventh Judicial Circuit is funded both by the State of Florida and Miami-Dade County. The Circuit's budget is approximately \$84 million dollars a year.<sup>22</sup> The Miami-Dade County operating budget is \$54 million dollars.<sup>23</sup> Approximately \$5 million dollars of the Miami Dade County budget is allocated to personnel who provide administrative support to the Family, Domestic Violence and Juvenile Divisions of this circuit.<sup>24</sup> Some services developed by the Eleventh Judicial Circuit's Administrative Office of the Court to provide support for these Divisions do not fall under the essential court functions that the State is required to fund under Article V.<sup>25</sup> The three Divisions of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit that handle Family Cases continue to operate independently of each other with the exception of some Domestic Violence Injunction cases. Pursuant to Administrative Order 01-16, Domestic Violence injunction cases, where the parties have a pending Family Division case, are transferred to the Family Division and consolidated with the Family Division case.<sup>26</sup>

The current Family Court case management system focuses on reducing backlog, ensuring compliance with court orders and monitoring the compliance of self-represented litigants with documentation requirements. From studies of other Unified Family Court systems, we have learned principles and values of differentiated case management, coordination of cases with overlapping issues, and the value of appropriate referrals and monitoring of parties' compliance. However, full implementation has been limited due to insufficient staff and

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<sup>22</sup> Miami Dade County FAMIS System FY 00-01 (January 2002); State Courts System Schedule of Allotments January 2001.

<sup>23</sup> *Id.*

<sup>24</sup> *Id.*

<sup>25</sup> FLA. CONST. art. V (revised 1998).

<sup>26</sup> *See* Eleventh Judicial Circuit Administrative Order 01-16 (2001).

inadequate technology. The Eleventh Judicial Circuit is faced with the challenge of improving case process while responding to the continued challenge of decreasing resources and timely resolution of increased cases loads. Reorganization and the possibility of consolidating resources within the three divisions by establishing a DCM System for our Family Court will play a vital role in the coordination of cases and maximize resources in these separate divisions.

Our current administrative structure already differentiates between domestic violence and juvenile cases. These cases have strict statutory case time standards that must be adhered to.<sup>27</sup> A specialized division ensures that cases are being disposed of in accordance with the statutory mandated time standards and that the proper resources are allocated to each case. For the purposes of this research, I have opted to exclude these cases from the caseload study. To attempt to propose including these types of cases in a DCM model for our circuit would be to assume that all cases would be filed and screened by one central office. This research presumes that our circuit will continue to have three divisions handling the Family Cases and that we will incorporate any coordination procedures developed in the Unified Family Court Pilot Project into our DCM model.

### **Review of Relevant Literature**

Several publications and articles on the topics of Unified Family Courts and Differentiated Case Management were reviewed.<sup>28</sup> These publications were helpful in understanding the ideology and movement of DCM in Family Courts. The consensus in the field of DCM is that goals of timeliness and fairness are most likely achieved when courts actively

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<sup>27</sup> See Generally Florida Statutes § 39 (1999); Florida Statutes § 741.30 (1999).

<sup>28</sup> Bakke; Linda Torkelson. "Differentiated Case Management: A Bench/Bar Partnership" Court Management. (Winter 1991); Linda Torkelson. "Beyond Delay: Using Differentiated Case Management" Court Manager. 8.34 (1993); Kuhn; Catherine J. Ross. "The Failure of Fragmentation: The Promise of a System of Unified Family Courts." Family Law Quarterly 32.1 (Spring 1998): 3-30; Barbara A. Babb. "Where We Stand: An Analysis of America's Family Law Adjudicatory Systems and the Mandate to Establish Unified Family Courts." Family Law Quarterly 32.1 (Spring 1998): 31-65. David C. Steelman, John A. Goerdts and James E. McMillian. Case Flow Management: The Heart of Court Management in the New Millennium National Center for State Courts, (2000).

supervise the progress of each case from filing to disposition.<sup>29</sup> Key features of DCM include development of multiple case processing tracks with different events and time frames that reflect specific case characteristics, eliminate unnecessary court appearances by scheduling only those events that contribute to disposition and the well being of families and the continuous case monitoring to ensure compliance with statutes, rules and orders and ensure cases do not get lost in the system.<sup>30</sup> Benefits in using DCM include greater scheduling certainty, better use of resources, improved quality of justice and increased coordination amongst the court and court agencies.<sup>31</sup>

Unified Family Courts promote the coordination of multiple cases involving the same family.<sup>32</sup> Effective case management is an essential component for coordination of services to families with multiple matters before the court.<sup>33</sup> Timely resolution of issues in Family Cases can be accomplished through aggressive case management that involves active supervision of cases from filing to resolution, screening cases at intake and establishing time goals for each type of case and scheduling procedures that maximize the effectiveness of court staff.<sup>34</sup>

Research in the area of DCM in Family Courts was difficult because of the difference in compositions of Family Courts throughout the United States. While there is an enormous amount of information on DCM and Unified Family Courts, there was little material on the two concepts combined. Indeed, DCM has had a limited history in Unified Family Courts.<sup>35</sup> DCM was first applied to domestic relation matters where cases were assigned to tracks based on

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<sup>29</sup> Bakke at 17.

<sup>30</sup> Id. at 71-72.

<sup>31</sup> Id. at 72.

<sup>32</sup> See Ted H. Rubin and Victor Flango. Court Coordination of Family Cases. National Center for State Courts, (1992). Carol R. Flango, Victor E. Flango and H. Ted Rubin. How Are Courts Coordinating Family Cases? National Center for State Courts, (1999).

<sup>33</sup> See *Generally* Id.

<sup>34</sup> Flango at 102-103.

<sup>35</sup> Kuhn at 71.

whether the cases were contested and/or were expected to result in major litigation.<sup>36</sup> Most information about the DCM programs used by other Family Courts came directly from the courts that responded to the data collection survey. The information, which was created internally by the different courts, was forwarded as a result of the data collection survey that was sent out. The DCM plans for seven Family Courts were studied.<sup>37</sup> General information about Family Courts was also received and reviewed.<sup>38</sup> The information received from these courts, allowed me to develop case identification protocols and case tracking characteristics. The majority of the DCM plans reviewed delineated four specific tracks used to differentiate family matters. A Fast/Uncontested track was used to process uncontested matters. A Standard/Contested track was utilized for those cases where there are contested issues that could be resolved through Alternative Dispute Resolution or similar intervention. In the Complex/High Conflict track cases are given a needs assessment early in the process, have closely monitored. Finally, an Expedited /Emergency track is utilized in matters that could affect the safety of children and families. I used these tracks to analyze the caseload study.

The history of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit's Family Court was reviewed to provide a historical perspective in our development of a Family Court and to examine possible new directions. In addition the Florida Supreme Court decisions relating to the establishment of

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<sup>36</sup> Id.

<sup>37</sup> Hartford Judicial District, Connecticut; Seventh Judicial Circuit of Florida; Circuit Court for Baltimore County, Maryland Family Law Differentiated Case Management Plan. (October 1994); Circuit Court for Prince George's County, Maryland; Circuit Court for Talbot County, Maryland; Virginia Beach Circuit Court, Virginia and the 17<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit of Colorado Memorandum of Family Courts policies and Procedures. (1998).

<sup>38</sup> Superior Court of Arizona, Maricopa County. Framework for an Integrated Family Court. (June 2001). Superior Court of California, County of Ventura. Family Law Checkpoint Program. (1999); Administrative Office of the Courts. Annual Report of the Family Divisions and Family Services Programs: At Status Report to the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee and the House Appropriations Committee. Annapolis, Maryland. (December 2001).

Family Courts in Florida<sup>39</sup> and all initial studies, plans and proposals for a Family Court prepared by Court Administration for the Eleventh Judicial Circuit in the last twelve years were also consulted.

Early studies and proposals prepared by a staff of the Administrative Office of the Courts of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit that examine problems and issues associated with the Family Courts were reviewed and analyzed.<sup>40</sup> These documents contained proposed case flow management recommendations for our Family Court. The recommended case management components called for the implementation of an intake unit with a DCM component. In an effort to develop and fund our family court, with the limited resources available at that time, our circuit developed a Case Management Unit but was unable to dedicate the appropriate amount of resources to the intake and DCM component. As a result, DCM was relegated to an informal function of the Case Managers. However, the concept and ideals associated with DCM have been present in our Family Court since its inception. After analysis the history of our family court and review of the present mandates of the Florida Supreme Court, it is imperative that our circuit adopt and implement DCM in our Family Court.

Statistical information on the Eleventh Judicial Circuit was obtained from the annual reports for the Eleventh Judicial Circuit for 1992 and the Comparative Statistical Report of January to December 2001.<sup>41</sup> The budget information was acquired from the Eleventh Judicial Circuit's Administrative Office of the Court's Fiscal Department. Finally, information about

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<sup>39</sup> In Re: Report of Commission on Family Courts, 588 So.2d 586 (Fla. 1991); In Re: Report of Commission on Family Courts, 633 So.2d 14 (Fla. 1994); In Re: Report of Commission on Family Courts, 646 So.2d 178 (Fla. 1994); In Re: Report of the Family Court Steering Committee 785 So.2d 438 (Fla. 2001).

<sup>40</sup> Charles D. Edelstein. "The Family Civil Department of the Circuit Court Blueprint for Change: A Discussion Document." Eleventh Judicial Circuit, Administrative Office of the Courts, Miami-Dade County. (March 1993); *See Also* Sharon Denaro. "Family Division: A Proposed Family Court System and Budget." Eleventh Judicial Circuit, Administrative Office of the Courts, Miami-Dade County, Florida. (1991 amended May 12, 1994).

<sup>41</sup> Eleventh Judicial Circuit's Administrative Office of the Courts and Clerk's Office, Eleventh Judicial Circuit 1992 Annual Report, Miami-Dade County. (1992).

Revision 7 of Article V of the Florida Constitution was obtained from an article prepared by the Office of the State Courts' Administrator of Florida.<sup>42</sup>

### **Methodology**

Two research methods were used to obtain information relevant in the development of a proposal for a DCM system for the Family Court of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit. A data collection survey was developed and used to determine best practices in the area of DCM in Family Courts and to obtain information from other courts relevant to the formulation of goals and objectives for a DCM system for our Family Court (Appendix A). Second, the caseloads of two of our circuit's Family Court Judicial Sections were reviewed to determine current caseload characteristics in Family Court. The information derived from the caseload study provided valuable data for developing the criteria to differentiate the cases, proposing a method of screening cases, determining DCM track characteristics and developing a method for monitoring and evaluating the proposed DCM model for our Family Court.

### **Data Collection Survey**

The main purpose of the data collection survey was to determine the best practices in the area of Differentiated Case Management Programs in Family Courts. The "Goals and Objectives of Differentiated Case Management" section of the Bureau of Justice Assistance Differentiated Case Management Implementation Manual was instrumental in developing the survey.<sup>43</sup>

Although the Eleventh Judicial Circuit is far from having a Unified Family Court, gathering information on case types and how they are incorporated into a DCM system will be valuable as our circuit moves towards unification. A critical component of Unified Family Courts is having

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<sup>42</sup> Office of the State Courts Administrator, The Facts About CRC's Proposed Amendments to Article V of the Florida Constitution. (Florida: June 1998).

<sup>43</sup> Cooper at 3.

comprehensive jurisdiction.<sup>44</sup> The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges recommend that Unified Family Courts deal with all matters affecting families and children; this includes all aspects of divorce, dependency, families and children in need of services, delinquency, guardianship, matters involving incompetency and mental health, legal medical issues and emancipation of minors.<sup>45</sup>

Questions were developed to target and determine the scope of jurisdiction in Family Courts surveyed. Specifically, what types of cases are included in their respective family courts? In addition, the survey asked whether these cases were assigned to differentiated case tracks and if so, the number of tracks the courts had developed and employed. The number of tracks and their characteristics and criteria would provide helpful information to develop track assignments and a method of case identification for our circuit. Two general goals for the DCM programs are to reduce case processing time and improve the use of judicial resources. The answer to those specific questions in the survey would enable me to propose realistic expectations for the Circuit in measuring success of the proposed DCM program.

The data collection survey was faxed to approximately two hundred courts throughout the United States over a period of three months. The mailing list for the data collecting survey included all 20 Circuits in Florida, the list of courts that participated in the coordination study conducted by the National Center for State Courts in 1999 reported in "*How are Courts Coordinating Family Cases?*," the Urban Court Managers Membership List as well as other courts referred to in my reference sources. The data collection survey was specifically sent to all twenty circuits in Florida because of the recent Florida Supreme Court decision regarding the Model Family Court. Additionally, the Eleventh Judicial Circuit is a large urban court; the

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<sup>44</sup> Ross at 15.

<sup>45</sup> Ross at 16

Urban Court Manager's membership list was used to survey other large urban courts. Finally, the National Association of Court Managers membership list was also used to send the survey to other courts in urban areas throughout the United States.

After faxing two hundred surveys, fifty-one completed surveys were received which amounted to a 25.5% participation rate. Of the fifty one completed surveys received, only nineteen courts used DCM in their Family Courts. The Data Collection Surveys and a summary of the results are found in Appendix A.

### **Caseload Study**

The second component of this research is a caseload study. The Bureau of Justice Assistance Differentiated Case Management Implementation Manual suggests that before developing a DCM program for any court, caseload characteristics should be analyzed.<sup>46</sup> The analysis should include an inquiry as to the case type, age of cases, frequency of continuances, case processing time and disposition time frames.<sup>47</sup> This provides a framework for gathering data relevant to the design of a DCM Program.<sup>48</sup> The results of the data collection survey also would assist in the creation the tools needed to analyze the caseload study.

Family matters in the Eleventh Judicial Circuit are randomly assigned to judicial sections in the Family Division. There are twelve judicial sections. Each case is also categorized by an action code. For example, dissolutions of marriage without children have an action code of 05. Dissolution of marriage with children has an action code of 06. The following case types are all included in our Family Court:

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<sup>46</sup> Cooper at 7.

<sup>47</sup> *Id.*

<sup>48</sup> *Id.*

**Table 1****Family Division Case Type by Action Code**

<b>Action Code</b>	<b>Case Type</b>
05	Dissolution of Marriage
06	Dissolution of Marriage w/children
07	Simplified Dissolutions
12	Domestic Violence Injunction Cases <sup>49</sup>
13	Adoption
15	Child Support
16	Name Change
18	Paternity
19	Other Petitions
20	URESA
26	Repeat Violence

To begin the caseload study, the Eleventh Judicial Circuit's Court Information Technology Services Division extracted information from the Mainframe's Civil Information System in the form of a statistical report. The statistical report listed all cases filed, by action code, for two judicial sections and reported the period of time the case was pending. One of the characteristics that needed to be evaluated was case processing time. The calendar year 1998 was selected in order to ensure that the majority of all the cases would have a disposition date. There were 13, 973 cases filed in the twelve family division sections in 1998.<sup>50</sup> The scope of the

<sup>49</sup> The only Domestic Violence Injunction cases reviewed were those cases transferred in to the Family Division where there was a pending Family Division case.

<sup>50</sup> Adoption cases were not included in the caseload study as they have restricted access in our court and computer system. They accounted for an additional 424 cases for the year 1998.

analysis was narrowed by selecting two of the twelve divisions for the caseload review. Cases filed in the two family division sections which accounted for 2674 cases or approximately 20% of the entire family division's filings for the year were individually reviewed.

In reviewing the cases, the format suggested in of the Bureau of Justice Assistance Differentiated Case Management Implementation Manual was followed. Cases were looked at in thirty-day increments for the first 120 days.<sup>51</sup> The time increments were then increased and cases were looked at six months, one year, two years and three years from the day of filing. Disposition time frames and key events that take place during the case process that are associated with disposition were also studied. These case characteristics assist in the development of procedures in the different proposed tracks to promote early disposition of cases.

One of the problems encountered during the caseload study was determining the number of cases that actually went to trial. We do not capture trial statistics for the Family Division. Most of the final judgments state, "...this matter came before the court on..." which would not necessarily mean there was a trial. Another problem was that the trial date on the trial notice often did not coincide with the final judgment date. This frequently occurs because continuances are not properly documented and are not captured by our system. Additionally, the Family Division Judge schedules are not automated; they are still kept manually in appointment books. Another ambiguity is that the trial date would not appear in our computer system if the case is referred to a general master for trial.<sup>52</sup>

In order to resolve this issue, several factors were considered to determine whether a case had gone to trial. All cases with settlement agreements and no trial dates were eliminated from the cases that went to trial category. Cases where there were mediated settlement agreements

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<sup>51</sup> Cooper at 7.

<sup>52</sup> General Masters preside over matters referred to them by a Judge. They can handle all aspect of Family Cases except for Domestic Violence Injunction cases.

shortly after their mediation date regardless of whether they had a trial date or not were also ruled out. The trial dates were compared with the dates of the final judgments. If the dates were close, I looked to see if there were any exhibits filed or any other indication that the case went to trial. On the more lengthy cases, in addition to making my analysis, judges and/or their judicial assistants were consulted and asked if they could recall the case having gone to trial. Although the number may not be one hundred percent accurate, the rough estimate was sufficient to enable me to propose procedures for the different tracks.

### **Findings**

The information derived from the caseload study and the data collection survey proved to be helpful in the development of the proposal for DCM in our Family Court. I was able to identify our caseload characteristics and used that information to develop criteria for case tracks. The surveys provided information on the number and types of tracks associated with family courts, methods of assignment of cases to those tracks and expected outcomes. Finally, I was also able to identify areas in our Family Court that need improvement and address those improvements with DCM.

Of the courts that responded to the survey, 37% indicated that they employed or had a DCM system in place in their Family Court. The number of tracks the cases are routed through ranged from one track, where a case manager or coordinator reviews cases and makes recommendations to the court based on the cases' complexity, to each and every single case type having its own track (See Table A.2 in Appendix A). Nevertheless, I was able to identify at least four distinct tracks that were present in one form or another in these courts. These tracks are referred to as: a fast or uncontested track; a standard track; a complex/high conflict track; and an

emergency track. I used these four tracks as a basis for analyzing the cases in the caseload study and compared how the cases would have fared if these case tracks had been used.

### **Fast/Uncontested Case Track**

In most courts surveyed, a fast track or uncontested case track a final hearing is usually set immediately after a required statutory waiting period or within thirty days of the date of filing. These cases need little or no judicial intervention. In these cases spousal support, child support, custody and visitation are not requested. The fast track also include cases where there are written and signed agreements by the parties and cases where there are no disputed issues.

In the Eleventh Judicial Circuit's Family Court, there are several case types that can be included in this type of a track; Simplified Dissolution, Name Changes and cases where there are marital settlement agreements and/or Answer/Waiver at the time of filing.<sup>53</sup> All of these cases could potentially be closed within thirty days of the date of filing. The caseload study demonstrated that only 595 cases out of 2674 or 22.3% of the cases were disposed of within 30 days of the filing date (See Table 2 & 3).

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<sup>53</sup> An Answer/Waiver is a response to the petition, where the responding party agrees with the allegations made by the petitioning party in the petition and waives their right to be notified of the final hearing.

**Table 2****Days to Disposition by Case Type**

<b>Case Type</b>	<b>0-30</b>	<b>30-60</b>	<b>60-90</b>	<b>90-120</b>	<b>120-180</b>	<b>180 - 1 Year</b>	<b>1-2 Years</b>	<b>2-3 Years</b>	<b>3 Years +</b>	<b>Total</b>
Dissolution of Marriage With Children	91	154	97	73	123	198	106	10	6	858
Dissolution of Marriage	264	302	232	145	111	118	34	5	0	1211
Paternity	4	9	8	5	8	29	15	5	1	84
Child Support	1	0	1	0	0	3	4	1	0	10
Domestic Violence	97	41	12	6	7	3	4	0	0	170
Name Change	55	26	13	7	3	5	1	0	0	110
Other Petitions	4	5	8	13	8	19	8	0	0	65
Simplified Dissolution	79	80	3	1	0	2	0	0	0	165
Uresa	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>595</b>	<b>617</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2674</b>

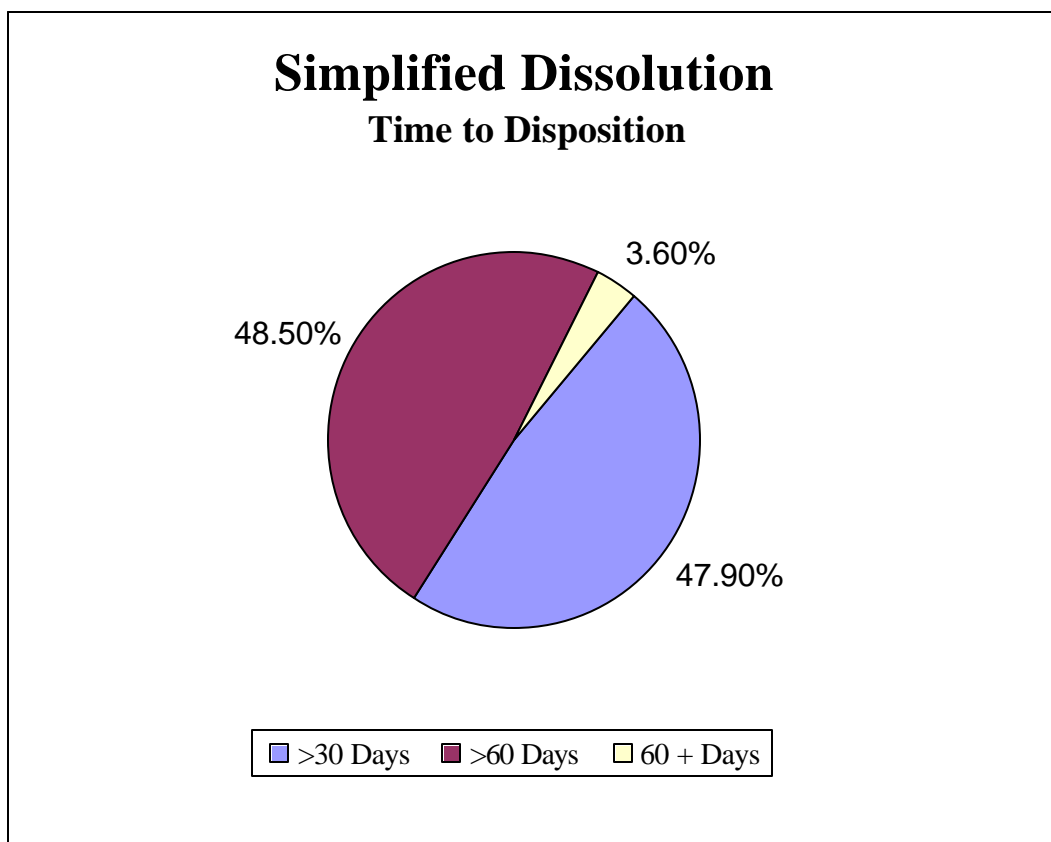
**Table 3****Days to Disposition by Case Type - Percentages**

<b>Case Type</b>	<b>0-30</b>	<b>30-60</b>	<b>60-90</b>	<b>90-120</b>	<b>120-180</b>	<b>180 - 1 Year</b>	<b>1-2 Years</b>	<b>2-3 Years</b>	<b>3 Years +</b>	<b>Total</b>
Dissolution of Marriage with Children	10.6%	18.0%	11.3%	8.5%	14.3%	23.1%	12.4%	1.2%	0.6%	100.0%
Dissolution of Marriage	21.8%	25.0%	19.1%	12.0%	9.1%	9.6%	3.0%	0.4%	0.0%	100.0%
Paternity	4.8%	10.7%	9.5%	6.0%	9.5%	34.5%	17.8%	6.0%	1.2%	100.0%
Child Support	10.0%	0.0%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%	30.0%	40.0%	10.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Domestic Violence	57.1%	24.2%	7.0%	3.5%	4.1%	1.8%	2.3%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Name Change	50.0%	23.6%	12.0%	6.3%	2.7%	4.5%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Other Petitions	6.2%	7.7%	12.3%	20.0%	12.3%	29.2%	12.3%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Simplified Dissolution	47.9%	48.5%	1.8%	0.6%	0.0%	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Uresa	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
<b>Cumulative %</b>	22.3%	23.2%	13.9%	9.3%	9.7%	14.1%	6.5%	0.8%	0.2%	100.0%

During my review, I identified an additional 523 cases that met the above stated fast track criteria that could have been closed within 30 days of the filing date. Based on these findings, approximately 42% of the Family division caseload could potentially be disposed of within 30 days of the filing date.

In Florida, Simplified Dissolution cases do not involve children, property, debts and/or assets. Both parties must appear together to file the case and they are given their final hearing date on the day they file. Theoretically, because the parties receive their final hearing date on the day they file, notice is not a problem in these cases. Thus, 100% of the cases with this case type could easily be given a final hearing date and be disposed of within 30 days of the filing date. The caseload study showed that only 47.9% of those cases were disposed of within thirty days. An additional 48.5% of the Simplified Dissolution cases were closed within 60 days and 3.6% of these cases were disposed of between 60-288 days of the filing date.

Chart 1



Although having 96% of this type of cases close within 60 days does not seem overwhelmingly appalling, administratively, there is no reason why all of these cases could not

be closed within 30 days of the day of filing to avoid unnecessary delays for the parties. After reviewing these cases individually, it was apparent that the reason that the majority of the cases did not close within thirty days was because the initial hearing date given at the time of filing was not within the thirty days.

I reviewed the procedures for calendaring uncontested cases in our Family Court. All of our family judges have weekly uncontested/final hearing calendars for cases that have no issues. However, many of them have caps on the number of cases that can be set on these calendars. Another factor in the delay is that there is a twenty-day waiting period for Dissolution of Marriages in Florida.<sup>54</sup> Since the clerk must set the case after the twenty-day waiting period, there are only two potential calendars that the case can be set on within thirty days.<sup>55</sup> If the cap has already been met for those particular dates, the clerk must select another day before that judge to set the case, thus the parties wait longer for a final hearing date.

Of the 3.6 % of the Simplified Dissolution cases that took longer than 60 days to close, three of those cases were reset for a final hearing more than three times, two cases were referred to reconciliation counseling and one case was dismissed for lack of prosecution after 288 days. Ideally, an efficient case management system would identify these cases earlier on in the process and bring them to closure in a more efficient time frame.

Name Change cases are another case type that could potentially be set for final hearing and disposed of within thirty days of the filing date. There is no statutory waiting period for these cases.<sup>56</sup> Other than name changes for minors, which require service on the other parent, these cases could be set for final hearing immediately upon filing. The Name Change for minor cases that require service of process should be disposed of well within 180 days even when

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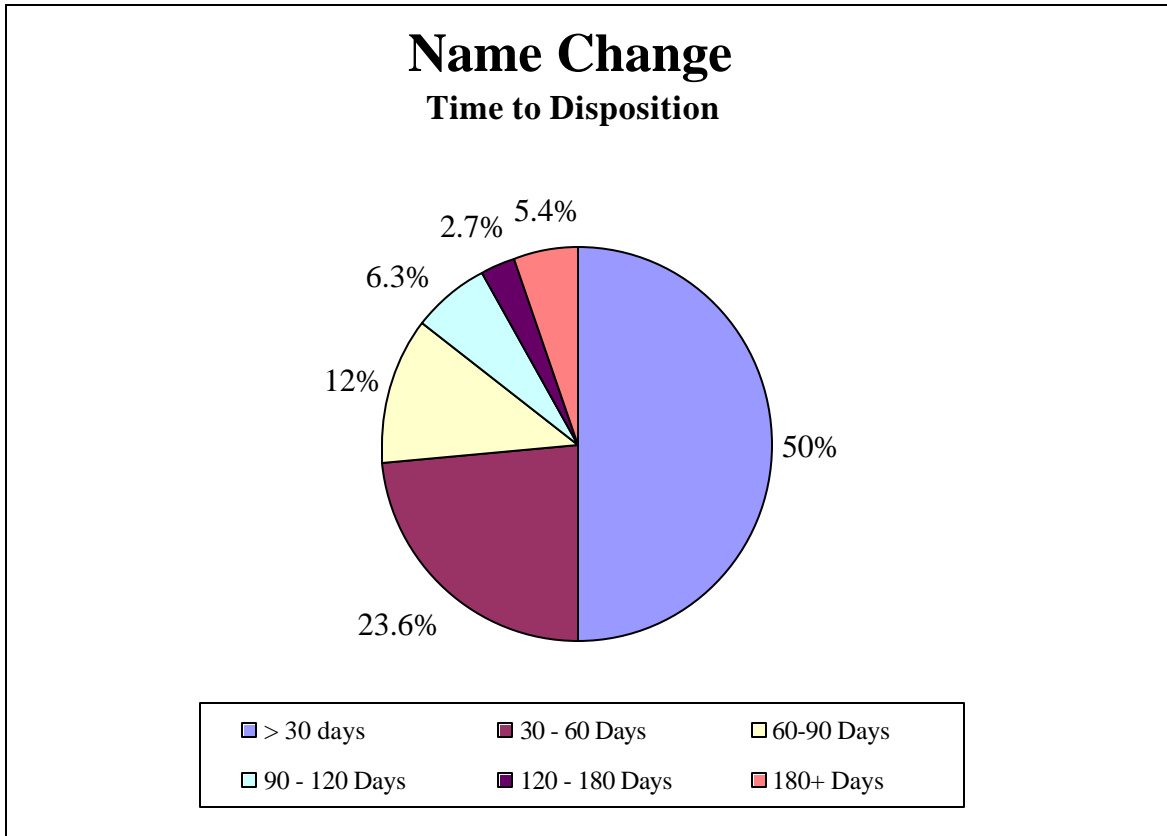
<sup>54</sup> See Florida Statutes § 61.30 (1999).

<sup>55</sup> Parties can file a waiver of the 20 day waiting period requirement.

<sup>56</sup> Florida Statutes § 68.07 (1999).

allowing 120 days for service of process.<sup>57</sup> The caseload study showed that only 50% of the cases closed within thirty days. By 180 days 94.6% of the cases were closed.

Chart 2



Upon review of the individual cases, I found that of those cases that did not close within thirty days, only fifteen cases or 27% involved name changes of a minor that required service of process on the parent. As a result, 86 % of the cases in this case type could have potentially been disposed of within 30 days of the filing date as opposed to only 50%.

Other types of cases that could be set within thirty days are those where at their initial filing, the parties file a marital/property settlement agreement or an answer/waiver. When the initial pleadings for these cases are filed, there is no requirement for the attorneys and/or the

<sup>57</sup> Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure Rule 12.070 (2001).

parties to automatically set the case for final hearing. Thus the case could remain dormant on a docket until the Family Division Case Manager identifies it at the thirty-day review. Review of all of the dissolution of marriage, dissolution of marriage with children, paternity, child support and Other Petition cases, indicated that 705 cases had either answer/waivers or marital settlement agreements at the time of filing. Only 309 or 43% of those cases were disposed of within thirty days. With a DCM system in place, an additional 396 cases could be identified and fast tracked to disposition within 30 days of the file date.

An additional 20% of Simplified Dissolution cases, Name Change cases and cases where marital settlement agreements were filed at the time of initial filing that did not originally close within thirty days would be eligible to close within thirty days. Immediate identification of simplified dissolution, name changes not involving minor children and cases with marital/property settlement agreements and/or answer/waivers and requiring that these cases be set for final hearing within 30 days of the file date would ensure early disposition of these cases, avoiding unnecessary delays for the parties.

As previously stated, at least 42% of the caseload can be identified as uncontested at the time of filing and can be set for hearing within 30 days. Domestic Violence Injunction cases account for another 6% of the caseload and they will be discussed later in this paper under the emergency track. That leaves 52% of the caseload (1373 cases) that could either be characterized as a Standard/Contested Track or a Complex/High Conflict Track.

### **Standard/Contested Track**

Cases that are assigned to a standard track include cases where one or more issues cannot be agreed to by the parties and/or cases where there is no indication of whether the case is contested or uncontested until the answer or response is filed. Usually, the contested issues in

these cases are financial in nature. These cases are generally referred to mediation/arbitration or a set before a judge or general master for a status conference early in the litigation process. Great emphasis is placed on settling the case prior to trial. At any point in the process, after the occurrence of certain events, i.e., service, an answer is filed, parties attend mediation, etc., a case in this track could settle and be set for an uncontested final hearing or it could become a complex cases requiring additional judicial intervention.

One of the primary components of this track is proper case identification. Currently, the Family Division Case Managers review cases every thirty days to ensure that the case is progressing through the system and that the parties and/or attorneys are complying with all court orders, statutory and local rule requirements. Informally, the Family Division Case Managers have been employing DCM in our Family Court since the inception of the Case management Unit in 1995. They direct cases through different channels depending on specific events that occur throughout the duration of the case. Although Case Managers follow general guidelines when taking action on these cases, procedures are not uniform. Where one judge might direct the case to mediation after a contested answer is filed, another may set that same case for a status conference.

The type of action taken in cases in a Standard/Contested Track depends upon the occurrence of specific events. If there is no responsive pleading filed at the time of initial filing, the next key event that triggers disposition is service of process. Florida law allows 120 days for service from the date the Petition was filed.<sup>58</sup> Pursuant to the Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure, respondents have 20 days to file an answer after service has been perfected on them.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Florida Family Rules of Procedure Rule 12.070. (2001)

<sup>59</sup> *Id.*

If an answer is not filed, the court can enter a default.<sup>60</sup> Consequently, these cases can remain open for at least 120 days without any activity. Once a default is entered, the case can be immediately set for an uncontested final hearing. This study revealed that defaults were entered in 46% or 634 cases of the remaining 1373 cases. Ideally, if properly identified, all of these cases should be disposed of within sixty days of the service date. That would allow twenty days for a response, 10 days for the default to be entered and mailed and thirty days to set the hearing. All of these cases should therefore be closed within 120-180 days. However, the case load study showed that 18 % of these cases (114 cases) remained open for 180 days or longer (See Table 4). Again, early identification and proper case monitoring could have avoided unnecessary delays.

**Table 4**

**Time to Disposition for 634 Cases where Defaults were Entered**

<b>Time to Disposition</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative %</b>
0 - 30 days	0 %	0 %
30 – 60 days	11 %	11 %
60 – 90 days	31 %	42 %
90 – 120 days	23 %	65 %
120 – 180 days	17 %	81 %
180 +	18 %	100 %

If an answer is filed and the case is uncontested, the case can also be immediately set for an uncontested final hearing. When the Eleventh Judicial Circuit's Family Division Case Management program was first implemented in 1995, one of the case managers' responsibilities

<sup>60</sup> *Id.*

was to review the answer/response filed in cases to determine whether the cases were contested or uncontested. If the case was uncontested, the case manager would set it for final hearing. If the case was contested they would set it before a general master or the judge for a status conference. During these status conferences, the judge/general master would address discovery issues, outstanding motions, temporary relief requests and other issues that could be settled prior to trial. The judge/general master would refer parties to the appropriate social service providers if necessary and/or refer the parties to mediation. Currently, some judges still conduct these status conferences. However, the setting of status conferences has become arbitrary and procedures vary from judge to judge.

The caseload study showed that answers were filed in 787 cases. In 295 cases of the 787 cases where answers were filed, the answers did not contest any statements in the Petition and thus they were uncontested. Of those 295 uncontested cases, 262 or 89 % closed within 180 days of the filing date (See Table 5). Early identification of these cases could improve the time to disposition.

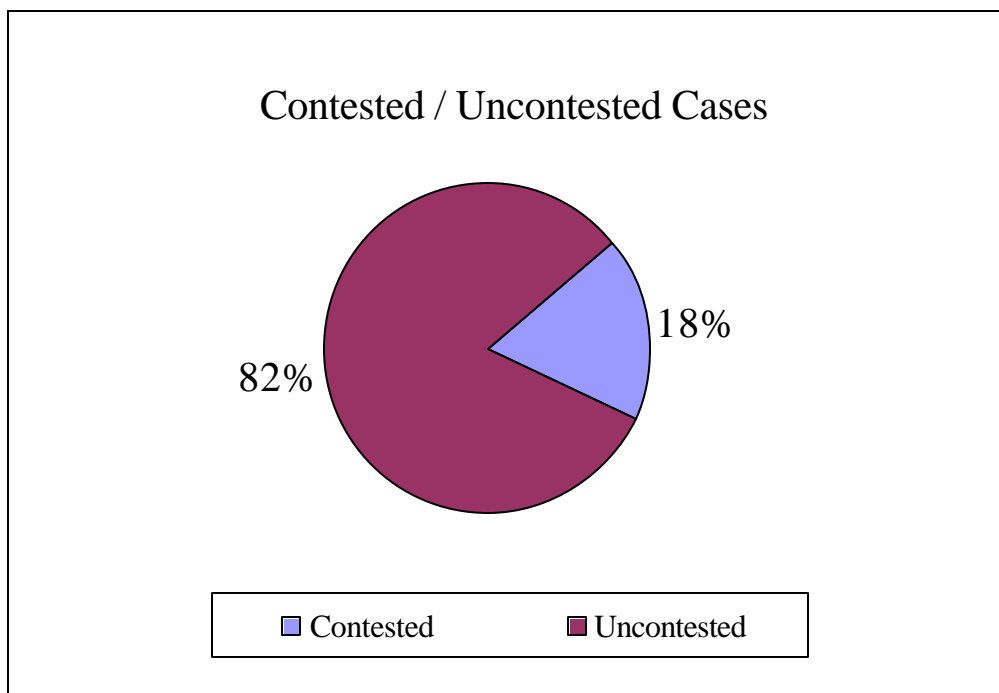
**Table 5**

**Time to Disposition for 295 Cases Where Uncontested Answers Were Filed**

<b>Time to Disposition</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative %</b>
0 - 30 days	16 %	16 %
30 – 60 days	32 %	48 %
60 – 90 days	18 %	66 %
90 – 120 days	10 %	76 %
120 – 180 days	13 %	89 %
180 +	11 %	100 %

The types of cases that I have discussed so far in this paper are all uncontested and require very little judicial intervention. Case management staff and clerk's office personnel can do the majority of the work in these cases. What remains to be analyzed are the contested cases, which in the caseload study amount to 18% of the cases reviewed. (See Chart 3). This small percentage of cases takes the largest amount of judicial labor.

Chart 3



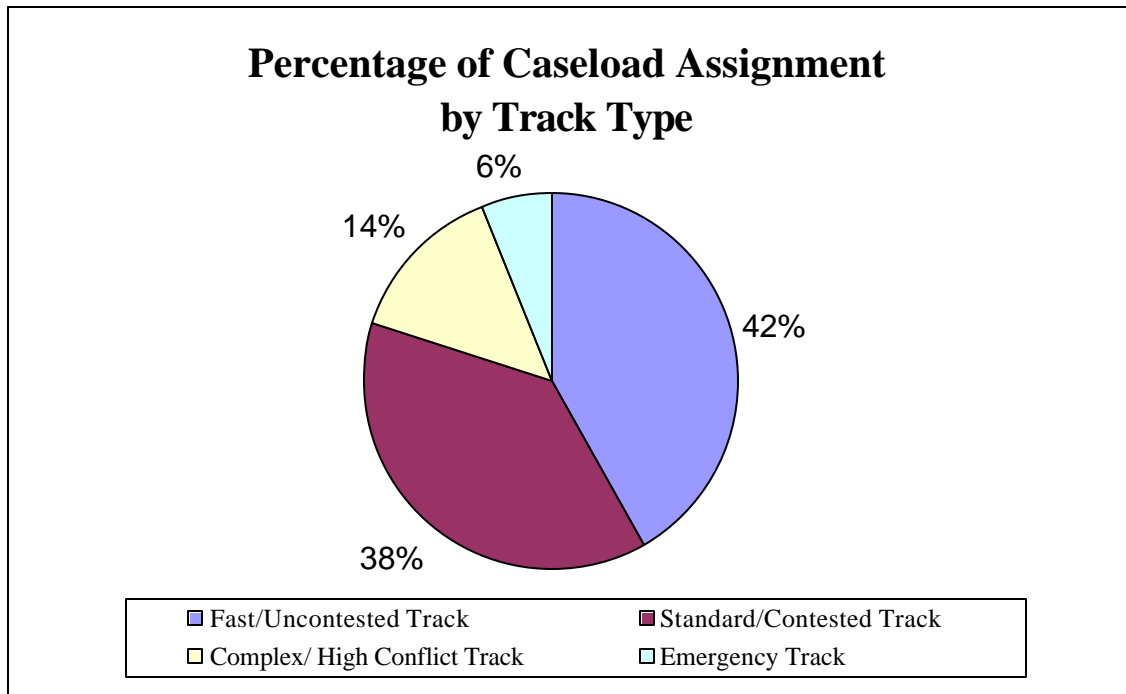
Out of the 787 cases where answers were filed, 63% were contested. Of these contested cases, 25% were contested dissolution of marriage without children cases. Only 18% of the contested dissolution of marriage without children cases actually went to trial. The other cases settled either on their own or at mediation. Court ordered mediation occurred in 52% of the contested dissolution of marriage without children cases. Of the cases ordered to attend mediation, 72% settled and proceeded to an uncontested final hearing. The remaining 28% of

the cases did not settle at mediation and had to proceed to trial. Of the 48% of the contested dissolution of marriage cases without children that were not court ordered to mediation, 95% did reach out of court settlements and thus also proceeded to an uncontested final hearing.

Consequently, the evaluation of the data in this category led me to conclude that one recommendation might be to include contested cases that do not involve children in the Standard Track. Only 18% of the contested dissolution of marriage without children cases identified went to trial. This would mean that the two family judges would have each had just 11 trials of the cases in the standard /contested track filed in that year. Furthermore, this type of case does not require a large amount of judicial intervention. The Case Managers could review these answers once filed and make the determination to refer standard/contested track cases to mediation so that the parties are provided an opportunity to resolve their case in a more timely fashion. Although 55 cases settled without being referred to formal mediation, a formal referral of mediation in these cases would appear to be productive because the parties ultimately reach an agreement. It seems likely that utilizing DCM could increase the number of settlements thereby decreasing the need for a trial. This would, in turn, allocate more time for judges to concentrate on the Complex/High Conflict Track cases.

In summary, approximately 39% of the cases in the caseload study would be assigned to the standard /contested track. At this point, we have reviewed and disposed of 81% of the caseload studied. That leaves 14% of the cases in the caseload study that have not been tracked. The remaining cases belong in the Complex/High Conflict track and the Domestic Violence Cases, which account for the remaining 6% of the caseload, would belong to the Emergency Track. (See Chart 4)

Chart 4



### **Complex/High Conflict**

The last track is the Complex/High Conflict Track. Cases that are assigned to a Complex/High Conflict track are usually contested cases with multiple issues including but not limited to custody and visitation issues. The litigants in these cases have been unsuccessful at settling issues at mediation. These cases receive more “hands on” case management conducted by either staff and/or the judges. Cases in this track are usually set for a status or scheduling conference where dates and deadlines are given for certain events like discovery, home studies, social service evaluation, completion of required parenting and/or divorce classes. A Scheduling Order outlining time frames for completion of specific tasks is prepared and signed during these conferences.

The total number of contested cases in the caseload was 495. As previously stated, of these cases, 25% were contested dissolution of marriage without children cases and would be

assigned to the Standard Track. The remaining 75% of the contested cases involved children. These cases make up the Complex/High Conflict Track. After reviewing the disposition dockets in these cases, I determined that approximately 26% of the contested case involving children went to trial. However, that is not to say that the 74% of these cases that did not go to trial did not also require considerable use of extensive judicial labor. Many of these cases had several hearings on temporary relief, custody and visitation that could have taken as long, or longer than if the cases would have proceeded to trial. By using DCM, these cases can be identified early in the process and assigned to the appropriate track that would enable the court to address issues of custody, visitation and support before they can escalate into a contested hearing.

Further review of the case study shows that of the contested cases involving children, only 52% were referred to mediation with a success rate of about 64%, 40% settled without any indication that they had attended any form of Alternative Dispute Resolution process and of the case that proceeded to trial in this category, 72% were referred to mediation but did not settle. It appears that although mediation will be effective in the majority of these cases, there will be cases that regardless of any attempt to mediate their disputes, a trial will always be necessary. Additional consideration needs to be given to the specific characteristics of these cases that will enable us to develop case indicators that may lead to the scheduling of an expedited trial.

It is also interesting to note that only 18% of the contested cases involving children were referred/ordered to social services, such as family court services, home study and appointment of Guardian Ad Litem. From the cases that were referred to social services only 42% reached a settlement and the other 58% of the cases required a trial. This is a clear indication that these cases are truly Complex/High Conflict cases. Even with the intervention of social service agencies, these Complex/High Conflict cases required trials. Therefore, more resources need to

be allocated to meet the needs of the individual parties, including children, in the cases assigned to the Complex/High Conflict Track. Again identifying specific case characteristics would allow the court to recommend more appropriate resources.

Although the cases routed to this Track require extensive judicial intervention, they would also benefit from a more intensive case management review at an early stage. The case study showed that the majority of the cases remained open well after six months from the filing date. (Table 6)

**Table 6**

**Time to Disposition for 373 Contested Cases Involving Children**

<b>Time to Disposition</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative %</b>
0 - 30 days	0 %	0 %
30 – 60 days	.5 %	.5 %
60 – 90 days	3 %	3.5 %
90 – 120 days	5 %	8.5 %
120 – 180 days	14 %	22.5 %
180 – 1 Year	45.5 %	68 %
1 year – 2 years	26 %	94 %
2 years – 4 Years	6 %	100 %

As soon as possible, after an answer is filed, the case manager should review the case to determine if it is necessary to refer it to mediation or to family court services. Ultimately, all of the cases comprising this Track should be set for case management/ status conferences on a regular basis. Through close monitoring, the judiciary can almost anticipate the issues that the

families in these cases will face. The court can timely address these issues through the use of case appropriate social services, education and Alternative Dispute Resolution

### **Emergency/ Expedited Track**

Cases that are routed to the emergency/expedited track are those cases where the safety of a child or a parent is at issue, i.e., parental kidnapping, abuse, depletion of assets, and domestic violence. However, as previously stated, domestic violence cases are handled in a separate division, where ample resources are allocated and there are specially trained personnel that understand the dynamics of these cases. Domestic Violence cases are transferred to the Family Division if the Family Division case has been pending for longer than six month or upon motion and good cause shown.<sup>61</sup> When these cases are transferred, the Family Division Judges also have access to the Domestic Violence Division resources, thus the parties receive the same quality of services whether they stay in the Domestic Violence Division or get transferred to the Family Division. The caseload study indicated that there were 170 domestic violence injunction cases transferred to the Family Division that made up 6 % of the caseload. Unfortunately, there are no statistics on the number of emergencies motions that are filed in our Family Court.

### **Conclusion/Recommendations**

In response to the 1991 and 1994 Florida Supreme Court's mandates regarding the establishment of Family Courts to coordinate all matters involving a single family, the Eleventh Judicial Circuit established a Family Civil Division, a Family Juvenile Division and a Domestic Violence Division of the Court.<sup>62</sup> The Florida Supreme Court and the Florida Legislature continue to refine the development of the Family Courts in Florida. They have adopted the

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<sup>61</sup> See Eleventh Judicial Circuit, Administrative Order 01-16 (2001).

<sup>62</sup> See In Re: Report of Commission on Family Courts, 588 So.2d 586 (Fla. 1991); In Re: Report of Commission on Family Courts, 633 So.2d 14 (Fla. 1994); In Re: Report of Commission on Family Courts, 646 So.2d 178 (Fla. 1994). See Also Denaro.

Family Law Rules of Procedure which set additional more stringent procedural requirements for family cases, developed procedural rules for court sponsored Self Help Programs, established funding sources and grants to test court processes and delineated components necessary in family courts that would improve the court's responsiveness to families and children.

Since its inception, the Eleventh Judicial Circuit Family Division developed and implemented procedures and protocols on the management of family cases. Initial plans and recommendations called for a system of differentiated case management. However, due to budgetary constraints and limited resources, it never came to fruition. The Eleventh Judicial Circuit's initial Family Division case management system, established in 1995, focused on reducing backlog, ensuring compliance with court orders and ensuring that self-represented litigants complied with documentation requirements. While our case management system uses some of the rudimentary principles of DCM, in order to achieve true efficiency and address more progressive philosophies of case processes it is imperative that we implement a formal/structured DCM. Based on the results of the data collection survey and the caseload study, it is clear that the Eleventh Judicial Circuit will greatly benefit from the principles and values of differentiated case management.

Four factors must be in place within the family court to implement an effective DCM program: (1) Commitment of the judges, prosecuting attorney, public defender and the bar to develop a Unified Family Court system that differentiates among case types for case processing purposes and pledges as a priority the protection of children and families; (2) Leadership at the highest level of the family court; (3) Commitment on the part of the Family Court and agencies that participate in the family court system to develop an intake and screening mechanism to assess cases at the time of receipt, and assign them to the appropriate track; and (4) Assessment

and modification of the appropriate court information management system to support the operation and monitoring of DCM in the Family Courts.<sup>63</sup>

All four factors are currently present or in development in the Eleventh Judicial Circuit. Regarding the commitment and leadership factors, pursuant to the Florida Supreme Court mandate, our circuit established a Unified Family Court Advisory Board that is comprised of community leaders, elected officials, agency directors, judiciary and court personnel.<sup>64</sup> The Administrative Judge of the Family Division is the Chair of this Advisory Board. Also, members of the Board include the Administrative and Associate Administrative judges of the Juvenile and Domestic Violence Divisions. The Unified Family Court Advisory Board's purpose is to provide guidance, support and direction to the Unified Family Court. This forum is an excellent medium to introduce the concept of establishing a formal DCM system for the Family Court. Commitment to the values and principles of DCM by this group would ensure success.

The third factor, to develop an intake and screening mechanism to assess cases at the time of receipt is also being addressed by the Eleventh Judicial Circuit. The Court will assume management of the Family Court's Self Help Program effective March 2002. This program was developed to assist pro se litigants with information and procedural assistance before, during and after they file a proceeding in the Family Division of the Court. Our Circuit expects to expand this Program in the near future to include an intake function where cases will be "triaged" to the appropriate case track and provide litigants with assistance with referral to ADR, social service agencies and other providers.

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<sup>63</sup> Kuhn at 72.

<sup>64</sup> In Re: Report of the Family Court Steering Committee, 26 Fla. L. Weekly at 292.

Finally, as to the technological aspect of DCM, at the time of this research, the Eleventh Judicial Circuit has already embarked in the long and arduous process to evaluate our current civil information system and is searching for a new case management information system. What is envisioned for the Eleventh Judicial Circuit is a comprehensive case management system that would identify related cases, monitor referrals and compliance with court orders, generate order forms at the tolling of statutory time standards, assign cases to tracks tolling specific time deadlines for those tracks, allow users to view previous orders on the screen, and support the accommodations of e-filing and provide the judiciary and court staff easier access to information.

Initially, I planned to conduct a pilot project in our court to test the proposed DCM system. However, my plan was thwarted by the Supreme Court mandate issued in May 2001 that called for the establishment of a Unified Family Court. Although DCM is an essential court function enumerated by the Supreme Court in its decision, our Circuit's priority became the Unified Family Court. My focus was divided between DCM and trying to develop a mechanism for identifying cross over or related cases and establishing protocols and procedures to manage these cases under the concept of a Unified Family Court. Thus the Unified Family Court Pilot Project was established and given priority over other projects. However, the Honorable Judith L. Kreeger, a Circuit Judge in our Family Division who is very committed to DCM and other innovations in family courts, has started her own pilot project in her division whereby contested cases are set for status conferences every four to six weeks. We created a Family Court Case Management Pilot Project Data Collection Survey to track her pilot project. We are in the preliminary stages of gathering opinions of the litigants and attorneys that have participated in these conferences through a survey.

Under the proposed DCM system and pursuant the caseload study, 42% of the family division case could be identified as uncontested at the time of filing and be set for hearing within 30 days. Domestic Violence Injunction cases account for another 6% of the caseload which would be routed to the Emergency Track. That would leave 52% of the caseload that could either be characterized as a Standard/Contested Track or a Complex/High Conflict Track.

Of the cases that could potentially be characterized as belonging in the Standard/Contested or the Complex High Conflict Track, 60% had either defaults entered or uncontested answered filed. An additional 25% of these cases settled before trial. As a result, instead of 78% of the entire caseload coming to resolution within six months of the filing date, under the proposed DCM system, 92% of the cases should be resolved within six months of their commencement.

The key strengths of DCM are that it improves the use of existing resources and brings speedier resolution to family matters. Of the courts surveyed that employ DCM in their family courts, 61% stated that they felt that DCM helps reduce the time from filing to disposition and 67% stated that they felt DCM helped improve judicial resources. This research also supports those statements. By bringing to resolution 92% of the cases within six months from the file date, the court not only would improve the number of cases that come to a speedier resolution but, with proper case identification and effective management techniques, i.e., use of Alternative Dispute Resolutions, it would enable the court to better use the existing resources for the remaining high conflict cases and provide a more complete service to families and children.

A DCM system will enable this Circuit to coordinate cases with overlapping issues, facilitate appropriate referrals to social service providers, and create a more holistic approach to address high conflict cases. Specifically, in high conflict cases, the caseload study demonstrated

that parties referred to mediation and social service providers did not automatically guarantee resolution of the case. These cases would benefit from continued judicial monitoring to ensure appropriate referrals and ensure expedited resolution of issues. Additionally, a DCM system would facilitate monitoring of parties' compliance with court orders and statutory requirements and respond to the continued challenge of timely resolution of cases. To date, we have been limited in our full implementation of this system by insufficient staff and inadequate technology. Considering the Circuit's current existing personnel resources and technological limitations these research findings, the following proposal was developed:

**Proposal for a Differentiated Case Management System for the  
Eleventh Judicial Circuit Family Division**

**I. Goals and Objectives**

Our current court system places the jurisdiction of family cases in multiple divisions. This often results in an absence of accurate and complete information, conflicting orders and duplication of efforts. Florida Courts have been given a mandate from the Florida Supreme Court to create a "fully integrated, comprehensive approach to handling all cases involving children and families while at the same time resolving family disputes in a fair, timely, efficient and cost effective manner."<sup>65</sup> This proposal provides a framework for the establishment of an effective case management system that will ensure timely disposition consistent with the circumstances of each case, enhance the quality of services our court provides and enable the just and efficient resolution of cases by improving system resources.

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<sup>65</sup> In Re: Report of the Family Court Steering Committee, 26 Fla. Law Weekly S287 (Fla. 2001).

## **II. Jurisdiction**

The policies and procedures described in this proposal apply to the following cases: dissolution of marriage, paternities, child support (Non Title IVD), adoptions, separate maintenance, name changes, domestic violence injunction cases (where the parties also have a family case pending), other petitions, modifications, enforcements and contempt matters. As procedures are developed in the Unified Family Court Pilot Project, Juvenile Dependency cases, Delinquency cases, Children and Families in Need of Services cases and Domestic Violence Injunction cases can be incorporated at a later date. Procedures will be modified accordingly.

## **III. Differentiated Case Management Tracks and Time Standards**

The Eleventh Judicial Circuit will implement differentiated case management to sorts and tracks cases by their complexity; identify uncontested cases and set them for early disposition; and use periodic case reviews and case management conferences and techniques to facilitate narrowing issues in contested cases. Cases will be assigned to one of four tracks: (1) Fast/Uncontested Track, (2) the Standard/Contested Track, (3) the Complex/ High Conflict Track and (4) the Emergency/Expedited Track. Cases assigned to the Fast / Uncontested track should be completed within 30 days of the filing date. Cases assigned to the Standard / Contested Track should be completed no later than 120 days if uncontested and 180 days if contested. Finally, cases in the Complex / High Conflict track should be completed within 180 days of the answer being filed. Due to the nature of the cases assigned to the Emergency / Expedited track, strict time standards would not be applicable to these cases. Rather, they will be resolved on a case by case basis as the court addresses the nature of the emergency.

**IV. Uncontested / Fast Track**

Approximately 42% of the Family Division's caseload will be assigned to this track. All simplified dissolution, name changes not involving minors, and cases where property settlement agreements and/ or answer/waiver are filed will automatically be assigned to this track at the time of filing. By Administrative Order, the parties will be required to file a Notice of Final Hearing at the time of their initial pleading. The Clerk's Office or the Family Division Case Management Unit will promptly set these cases for final hearing, upon the expiration of the statutory twenty day waiting period, if applicable, but within 30 days of the initial filing date. To ensure that there are sufficient calendars, a master calendar will be set up at the end of each month and/or judges could designate one of their four monthly uncontested calendars for cases assigned to this track.

**V. Standard / Contested Track.**

Approximately 38% of the caseload will be assigned to the Standard / Contested Track. Cases in cases where there are Notices of Action by Publication, a default. Uncontested answers and contested cases that do not involve children will be assigned to this track. Early identification of these cases is important. However a determination can only be made in these cases when service has been perfected and/or an answer is filed or a default is entered. The case manager will review cases every thirty days to monitor its progress. Cases that are identified as uncontested will immediately be set for an uncontested final hearing. Contested case without children will be tracked to Standard /Contested Track. Cases where children are involved will be assigned to the Complex/High Conflict track.

Upon assigning cases to the appropriate track, Case Managers will also prepare an Order of referral to Mediation for the cases assigned to the Standard/Contested track and schedule the

cases assigned to the Complex/ High Conflict track for Status Conferences. The Case Managers will continue to monitor these cases until disposition. Cases that fail to come to resolution within six months from the file date will be set for a status conference in order for the Court to ascertain the nature of the delay.

## **VI. Complex / High Conflict Track**

Contested cases with children will be initially assigned to this track. Within 30 days of filing, these cases will be referred for mandatory mediation on temporary issues. The case manager will send an information packet to the attorneys (or to the parties, if they are not represented by counsel) with information about the divorce or paternity case process, the merits of less adversarial resolution (unless the case presents indications of domestic violence), and an order for family mediation services. Temporary parenting and financial issues will be addressed at this first mediation, which will be conducted by the court staff mediators. The outcome of this mediation will be reported to the case manager who, depending on the outcome, will reassign the case to the Standard/Contested Track if the parties settled the case or keep the case in the current track.

The case manager will continue to review the cases every thirty days. The contested cases will proceed to the scheduled initial case management conference before a Judge or General Master, with the case manager available to provide information and support. Cases that are not accompanied by domestic violence will be referred to court-based mediation of temporary issues. If the parties do not reach an agreement in mediation, the case will be promptly set for an initial case management conference. At the case management conference the Judge or General Master may consider temporary parenting and/or financial issues to stabilize the reorganized family pending further hearing or ultimate resolution of their case. All case

management conferences will be set in block times on specific days of the week, when a mediator will be available to mediate appropriate cases on site. In the event that the parties object to a referral to the General Master, the division judge, who will be available to back up the General Master, will immediately hear the case.

The case manager will schedule all contested cases for case management review and conferences with the Judge or General Master every thirty days until the case is resolved. At each case management conference, the Judge or General Master will assess the parties' readiness for alternative dispute resolution and will attempt to facilitate narrowing of issues. At each review before the case management conference, the case manager will search the court system to identify related cases in other divisions of the court, mark file jackets accordingly and coordinate management of related cases in accordance with the protocol established by the Unified Family Court Pilot Project. During these case management conferences, the Judge or General Master will review compliance with mandatory disclosure, and establish a discovery schedule, to deter discovery disputes. At this case management conference and at each case management conference thereafter, the Judge or General Master, assisted by the family division case manager, will identify those cases that are ready for final alternative dispute resolution, and prepare the appropriate form orders of referral.

Unless the case presents complex financial or parenting issues, a final hearing date shall be set at or before the 90-day case management conference. The Family Court will have a firm "no continuances" policy, except in exigent circumstances. Each time new family issues arise, the case manager will triage the case, recommend appropriate evaluations and referrals, assess appropriate means of leading and enabling parties to resolve their disputes in less adversarial fashion, and monitor the parties' compliance with referrals and evaluation orders.

### **VIII. Emergency / Expedited Track**

In addition to Domestic Violence Injunction cases, emergency motions will be assigned to this track. Emergency Motions are usually filed as part of a family division case. At times, the motions are filed with the initial Petitions thus alerting everyone that this is a case that needs special attention. However, sometimes, the emergencies arise after the initial pleadings have been filed. In these cases, the case may need to be reassigned from a Standard or Complex/High Conflict Track to the Emergency/ Expedited Track. This Track is available to protect the safety of children and families. These cases are time sensitive and require an emergency hearing. Therefore, they need special attention to ensure that the hearing takes place as soon as possible. Although some judges already do this, my recommendation will be a uniform calendaring procedure where all the Family Division Judges set aside a couple of hours a week to handle emergencies.

### **IX. Program Evaluation**

Upon the implementation of a formal DCM system, statistics on disposition time frames will be reviewed and monitored every six months. Adjustments will be made to case tracks as needed. Trial statistics will also be relevant and useful in determining whether referrals to ADR and social services are effective. In addition exit surveys will be distributed to the parties and their attorney at the final hearing to monitor customer satisfaction.

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The best DCM system for our circuit is the four track system. My research showed that the proposed DCM system would address the inefficiency of our circuit's current case flow. Full implementation of this system with the appropriate resources and the initial intake process when the case is filed will accomplish timely disposition of cases consistent with the circumstances of

each case, enhance the quality of the services our court provides to litigants and enable the just and efficient resolution of cases by improving system resources.

## Data Collection Survey Results

<b>Number of Surveys Sent</b>	<b>Number of Surveys Received</b>	<b>Participation Rate</b>
200	51	25.5%

**Table A.1**

### Case Types included in Family Courts of the Jurisdictions that Responded to the Survey

Case Type	Number	Overall %
Dissolution of Marriage	41	100 %
Dissolution of Marriage involving Children	41	100 %
Paternity	41	100 %
Child Support	39	95 %
URESA	30	73 %
Separate Maintenance / Support unrelated to a Dissolution	31	75 %
Domestic Violence Restraining Orders	39	95 %
Domestic Violence Misdemeanors	10	24 %
Domestic Violence Felonies	11	26 %
Dependency	22	53 %
Delinquency	22	53 %
Children in need of Services	21	51 %
Name Change	27	65 %
Adoption	33	80 %
Did not specify case types in their Family Court	5	N/A
Did not have a Family Court	5	N/A

<b>Number of Courts that Did Not Use DCM</b>	<b>Number of Courts that use a Formal or Informal DCM system</b>	<b>Total</b>
31	19	51

## Data Collection Survey Results

**Table A.2** Number of Tracks used by Courts that use DCM in their Family Courts

Number of Tracks	Number	Percentage
1	1	5.5%
2	4	22.3%
3	1	5.5%
4	6	33.3%
5	4	22.3%
6 +	2	11.1%

**Table A.3** Criteria Used to Establish Tracks

Criteria	# of Courts Surveyed that use this criteria for one of their tracks	% of Courts' Surveyed that use this criteria for one of their tracks
Uncontested / Simple Cases – these cases are not at issue and/or the parties have an agreement.	13	72%
Contested / Standard Cases – these are contested cases that do not rise to the level of a high conflict, complex cases.	13	72%
Contested / Complex Case – these cases have multiple issues, usually involving children.	13	72%
Emergency Matters - these cases need to be heard on an expedited basis due to the nature of the allegations and to protect the safety of the parties and/or their children.	7	38%
Juvenile Cases – Dependency or Delinquency	4	22%
Related Cases, Bundled Cases – parties that have multiple cases in different courts within the jurisdiction.	2	11%
Amenable to Mediation – cases that can be referred to mediation for resolution of issues.	2	11%
Case Type – each case type has its own track	5	27%

## Data Collection Survey Results

**Table A.4 Differentiated Case Management Expectation Questions**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Data Not Available</b>	<b>No Response</b>
Did DCM help Reduce the time from filing to disposition?	61%	11%	17%	11%
Did DCM Help Improve Judicial Resources?	67%	11%	11%	11%

The length of time that Differentiated Case Management had been utilized by the Courts surveyed ranged from **6 months to 15 years**.

Eleventh Judicial Circuit  
Miami-Dade County, Florida  
Administrative Office of the Courts  
Data Collection Survey  
Family Courts

Name of Jurisdiction: \_\_\_\_\_  
Person Responding: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax Number: \_\_\_\_\_

The purpose of this survey is to gather information on Differentiated Case Management. Your input will be greatly appreciated.

Our Family Court hears the following case types:

Please check all that apply

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dissolutions                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Dissolutions w/Children    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paternities                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Child Support              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> URESA                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Separate Maintenance       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic Violence Restraining Orders | <input type="checkbox"/> Dependency                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic Violence Misdemeanors       | <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic Violence Felonies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children in need of services         | <input type="checkbox"/> Delinquency                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Name Changes                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Adoptions                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                          |   |

How many case processing tracks do the cases get routed to? \_\_\_\_\_

For each track please list criteria (attach separate sheets if necessary):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Did DCM help reduce the time from filing to disposition?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Did DCM help improve judicial resources?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How long has your DCM system been in place? \_\_\_\_\_

Please FAX or E-MAIL responses to:  
Celina Rios, Director, Family Division  
Fax Number: (305) 349-5921  
E- mail: [crios@jud11.flcourts.org](mailto:crios@jud11.flcourts.org)



## Case Load Study Results

### Total Cases

#### 1. All Cases

**Table B.1.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
705	645	960	364	2674
26%	24%	36%	14%	100%

**Table B.1.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
493	2181	2674
18%	82%	100%

**Table B.1.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
2322	119	78	155	2674
87%	4%	3%	6%	100%

## 2. Cases Closed Between 0 - 30 Days of the Filing Date

**Table B.2.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
214	0	46	4	264
81%	0%	17%	2%	100%

**Table B.2.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	264	264
0	100%	100%

**Table B.2.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
260	0	4	0	264
98%	0%	2%	0%	100%

### 3. Cases Closed Between 30 - 60 Days of the Filing Date

**Table B.3.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
175	62	58	7	302
58%	21%	19%	2%	100%

**Table B.3.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	302	302
0	100%	100%

**Table B.3.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
295	0	7	0	302
98%	0%	2%	0%	100%

#### 4. Cases Closed Between 60 - 90 Days of the Filing Date

**Table B.4.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
40	152	32	8	232
17%	66%	14%	3%	100%

**Table B.4.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
1	231	232
.5%	99.5%	100%

**Table B.4.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
224	0	8	0	232
97%	0%	3%	0%	100%

## 5. Cases Closed Between 90 - 120 Days of the Filing Date

**Table B.5.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
12	100	27	6	145
8%	70%	18%	4%	100%

**Table B.5.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
9	136	145
6%	94%	100%

**Table B.5.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
138	0	6	1	145
95.4%	0%	4%	.6%	100%

## 6. Cases Closed Between 120 - 180 Days of the Filing Date

**Table B.6.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
6	57	39	9	111
6%	51%	35%	8%	100%

**Table B.6.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
22	89	111
20%	80%	100%

**Table B.6.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
92	3	6	10	111
82 %	3 %	6 %	9 %	100 %

## 7. Cases Closed Between 180 days - 1 Year of the Filing Date

**Table B.7.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
3	35	67	13	118
2%	30%	57%	11%	100%

**Table B.7.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
60	58	118
51%	49%	100%

**Table B.7.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
72	13	3	30	118
61%	11%	2%	26%	100%

## 8. Cases Closed Between 1 - 2 Years of the Filing Date

**Table B.8.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
1	6	25	2	34
3%	17%	74%	6%	100%

**Table B.8.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
25	9	34
74%	26%	100%

**Table B.8.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
21	5	0	8	34
61%	15%	0%	24%	100%

## 9. Cases Closed Between 2 -3 Years of the Filing Date

**Table B.9.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	1	4	0	5
0%	20%	80%	0%	100%

**Table B.9.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
5	0	5
100%	0%	100%

**Table B.9.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
3	0	1	1	5
60%	0%	20%	20%	100%

## Dissolution of Marriages Cases (*Without Children*)

### 10. Dissolution of Marriage (Without Children) - All Cases

**Table B.10.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
451	413	298	49	1211
37%	34%	25%	4%	100%

**Table B.10.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
122	1089	1211
10%	90%	100%

**Table B.10.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
1109	21	31	50	1211
91%	2%	3%	4%	100%

**11. Cases Closed Between 0 - 30 Days of the Filing Date**

**Table B.11.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
214	0	46	4	264
81%	0%	17%	2%	100%

**Table B.11.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	264	264
0	100%	100%

**Table B.11.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
260	0	4	0	264
98%	0%	2%	0%	100%

**12. Cases Closed Between 30 - 60 Days of the Filing Date**

**Table B.12.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
175	62	58	7	302
58%	21%	19%	2%	100%

**Table B.12.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	302	302
0	100%	100%

**Table B.12.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
295	0	7	0	302
98%	0%	2%	0%	100%

**13. Cases Closed Between 60 - 90 Days of the Filing Date****Table B.13.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
40	152	32	8	232
17%	66%	14%	3%	100%

**Table B.13.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
1	231	232
.5%	99.5%	100%

**Table B.13.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
224	0	8	0	232
97%	0%	3%	0%	100%

## 14. Cases Closed Between 90 - 120 Days of the Filing Date

**Table B.14.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
12	100	27	6	145
8%	70%	18%	4%	100%

**Table B.14.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
9	136	145
6%	94%	100%

**Table B.14.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
138	0	6	1	145
95.4%	0%	4%	.6%	100%

## 15. Cases Closed Between 120 - 180 Days of the Filing Date

**Table B.15.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
6	57	39	9	111
6%	51%	35%	8%	100%

**Table B.15.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
22	89	111
20%	80%	100%

**Table B.15.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
92	3	6	10	111
82 %	3 %	6 %	9 %	100 %

## 16. Cases Closed Between 180 days - 1 Year of the Filing Date

**Table B.16.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
3	35	67	13	118
2%	30%	57%	11%	100%

**Table B.16.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
60	58	118
51%	49%	100%

**Table B.16.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
72	13	3	30	118
61%	11%	2%	26%	100%

## 17. Cases Closed Between 1 - 2 Years of the Filing Date

**Table B.17.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
1	6	25	2	34
3%	17%	74%	6%	100%

**Table B.17.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
25	9	34
74%	26%	100%

**Table B.17.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
21	5	0	8	34
61%	15%	0%	24%	100%

## 18. Cases Closed Between 2 -4 Years of the Filing Date

**Table B.18.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	1	4	0	5
0%	20%	80%	0%	100%

**Table B.18.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
5	0	5
100%	0%	100%

**Table B.18.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
3	0	1	1	5
60%	0%	20%	20%	100%

## Dissolution of Marriages with Children Cases

### 19. Dissolution of Marriage with Children - All Cases

**Table B.19.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
233	203	386	36	858
27%	24%	45%	4%	100%

**Table B.19.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
286	572	858
33%	67%	100%

**Table B.19.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
691	59	38	70	858
80%	7%	5%	8%	100%

## 20. Cases Closed Between 0 - 30 Days of the Filing Date

**Table B.20.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
86	0	0	5	91
94%	0%	0%	6%	100%

**Table B.20.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	91	91
0	100%	100%

**Table B.20.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
86	0	5	0	91
94%	0%	6%	0%	100%

## 21. Cases Closed Between 30 - 60 Days of the Filing Date

**Table B.21.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
103	8	32	11	154
67%	5%	21%	7%	100%

**Table B.21.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	154	0
0	100%	100%

**Table B.21.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
143	0	11	0	154
93%	0%	7%	0%	100%

## 22. Cases Closed Between 60 - 90 Days of the Filing Date

**Table B.22.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
26	43	26	2	97
27%	44%	27%	2%	100%

**Table B.22.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
7	90	97
7%	93%	100%

**Table B.22.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
95	0	2	0	97
98%	0%	2%	0%	100%

### 23. Cases Closed Between 90 - 120 Days of the Filing Date

**Table B.23.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
6	42	23	2	73
8%	58%	31%	3%	100%

**Table B.23.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
15	58	73
21 %	79 %	100 %

**Table B.23.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
68	1	2	2	73
93 %	1 %	3 %	3 %	100 %

## 24. Cases Closed Between 120 - 180 Days of the Filing Date

**Table B.24.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
5	47	65	6	123
4%	39%	52%	5%	100%

**Table B.24.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
46	77	123
37%	63%	100%

**Table B.24.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
98	4	9	12	123
80%	3%	7%	10%	100%

## 25. Cases Closed Between 180 days - 1 Year of the Filing Date

**Table B.25.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
7	45	136	10	198
3 %	23 %	69 %	5 %	100 %

**Table B.25.B Contested/ Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
128	70	198
65%	35%	100%

**Table B.25.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
137	19	10	32	198
69%	10%	5%	16%	100%

## 26. Cases Closed Between 1 - 2 Years of the Filing Date

**Table B.26.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	18	88	0	106
0%	17%	83%	0%	100%

**Table B.26.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
74	32	106
70%	30%	100%

**Table B.26.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
52	29	3	22	106
49%	27%	3%	20%	100%

## 27. Cases Closed Between 2 -4 Years of the Filing Date

**Table B.27.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	0	16	0	16
0%	0%	100%	0%	100%

**Table B.27.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
16	0	16
100%	0%	100%

**Table B.27.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
7	6	1	2	16
43%	37%	6%	12%	100%

## Paternity Cases

### 28. Paternity - All Cases

**Table B.28.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
11	12	58	3	84
5%	14%	69%	12%	100%

**Table B.28.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
49	35	84
58%	42%	100%

**Table B.28.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
43	20	3	18	84
80%	7%	5%	8%	100%

## 29. Cases Closed Between 0 - 30 Days of the Filing Date

**Table B.29.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
3	0	0	1	4
75%	0%	0%	25%	100%

**Table B.29.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	4	4
0	100%	100%

**Table B.29.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
3	0	1	0	4
75%	0%	25%	0%	100%

### 30. Cases Closed Between 30 - 60 Days of the Filing Date

**Table B.30.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
2	0	4	3	9
22%	0%	45%	33%	100%

**Table B.30.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
1	8	9
11%	89%	100%

**Table B.30.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
5	1	2	1	154
56%	11%	22%	11%	100%

### 31. Cases Closed Between 60 - 90 Days of the Filing Date

**Table B.31.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
2	1	5	0	8
25%	12%	63%	0%	100%

**Table B.31.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
1	7	8
12%	88%	100%

**Table B.31.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
7	1	0	0	8
88%	12%	0%	0%	100%

### 32. Cases Closed Between 90 - 120 Days of the Filing Date

**Table B.32.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
2	1	2	0	5
40%	20%	40%	0%	100%

**Table B.32.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
1	4	5
20%	80%	100%

**Table B.32.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
4	1	0	0	5
80%	20%	0%	0%	100 %

### 33. Cases Closed Between 120 - 180 Days of the Filing Date

**Table B.33.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	1	7	0	8
0%	12%	88%	0%	100%

**Table B.33.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
3	5	8
38%	62%	100%

**Table B.33.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
3	1	0	4	8
38%	12%	0%	50%	100%

**34. Cases Closed between 180 days - 1 Year of the Filing Date****Table B.34.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
1	4	24	0	29
3%	14%	83%	0%	100%

**Table B.34.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
24	5	29
83%	17%	100%

**Table B.34.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
10	8	0	11	29
33%	27%	0%	40%	100%

### 35. Cases Closed Between 1 - 2 Years of the Filing Date

**Table B.35.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	2	13	0	15
0%	13%	87%	0%	100%

**Table B.35.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
12	3	15
80%	20%	100%

**Table B.35.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
6	5	0	4	15
40%	33%	0%	27%	100%

### 36. Cases Closed Between 2 -4 Years of the Filing Date

**Table B.36.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	0	6	0	6
0%	0%	100%	0%	100%

**Table B.36.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
6	0	6
100%	0%	100%

**Table B.36.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
2	4	0	0	6
33%	67%	0%	0%	100%

## Child Support Cases

### 37. Child Support – All Cases

**Table B.37.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
1	1	7	1	10
10%	10%	70%	10%	100%

**Table B.37.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
6	4	10
60%	40%	100%

**Table B.37.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
4	2	1	3	10
40%	20%	10%	30%	100%

### 38. Cases Closed Between 0 - 30 Days of the Filing Date

**Table B.38.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
1	0	0	0	1
100%	0%	0%	0%	100%

**Table B.38.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	1	1
0	100%	100%

**Table B.38.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
1	0	0	0	1
100%	0%	0%	0%	100%

**39. Cases Closed Between 30 - 60 Days of the Filing Date****Table B.39.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	0	0	0	0
0%	0%	0%	0%	100%

**Table B.39.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	0	0
0%	0%	100%

**Table B.39.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	0	0	0	0
0%	0%	0%	0%	100%

**40. Cases Closed Between 60 - 90 Days of the Filing Date****Table B.40.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	0	0	1	1
0%	0%	0%	100%	100%

**Table B.40.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	1	1
0%	100%	100%

**Table B.40.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	0	1	0	1
0%	0%	100%	0%	100%

**41. Cases Closed Between 90 - 120 Days of the Filing Date****Table B.41.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	0	0	0	0
0%	0%	0%	0%	100%

**Table B.41.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	0	0
0%	0%	100%

**Table B.41.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	0	0	0	0
0%	0%	0%	0%	100 %

## 42. Cases Closed Between 120 - 180 Days of the Filing Date

**Table B.42.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	0	0	0	0
0%	0%	0%	0%	100%

**Table B.42.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	0	0
0%	0%	100%

**Table B.42.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	0	0	0	0
0%	0%	0%	0%	100%

**43. Cases Closed between 180 days - 1 Year of the Filing Date****Table B.43.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	1	2	0	3
0%	33%	67%	0%	100%

**Table B.43.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
1	2	3
33%	67%	100%

**Table B.43.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
2	0	0	1	3
67%	0%	0%	33%	100%

**44. Cases Closed Between 1 - 2 Years of the Filing Date****Table B.44.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	0	4	0	4
0%	0%	100%	0%	100%

**Table B.44.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
4	0	4
100%	0%	100%

**Table B.44.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
1	1	0	2	4
25%	25%	0%	50%	100%

**45. Cases Closed Between 2 -4 Years of the Filing Date**

**Table B.45.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	0	1	0	1
0%	0%	100%	0%	100%

**Table B.45.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
1	0	1
100%	0%	100%

**Table B.45.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
2	4	0	0	6
33%	67%	0%	0%	100%

## Other Petition Cases

### 46. Other Petitions – All Cases

**Table B.46.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
9	8	38	10	65
14%	12%	59%	15%	100%

**Table B.46.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
30	35	65
46%	54%	100%

**Table B.46.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
30	16	5	14	65
46%	25%	8%	21%	100%

**47. Cases Closed Between 0 - 30 Days of the Filing Date****Table B.47.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
4	0	0	0	4
100%	0%	0%	0%	100%

**Table B.47.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	4	4
0	100%	100%

**Table B.47.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
4	0	0	0	4
100%	0%	0%	0%	100%

**48. Cases Closed Between 30 - 60 Days of the Filing Date****Table B.48.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
3	0	0	2	5
60%	0%	0%	40%	100%

**Table B.48.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	5	5
0%	100%	100%

**Table B.48.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
3	0	0	2	5
60%	0%	0%	40%	100%

**49. Cases Closed Between 60 - 90 Days of the Filing Date****Table B.49.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
1	2	5	0	8
12%	25%	63%	0%	100%

**Table B.49.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
2	6	8
25%	75%	100%

**Table B.49.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
6	2	0	0	8
75%	25%	0%	0%	100%

**50. Cases Closed Between 90 - 120 Days of the Filing Date****Table B.50.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
1	2	7	3	13
8%	16%	52%	24%	100%

**Table B.50.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
8	5	13
62%	38%	100%

**Table B.50.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
7	2	2	2	13
52%	16%	16%	16%	100%

## 51. Cases Closed Between 120 - 180 Days of the Filing Date

**Table B.51.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	1	3	4	8
0%	12%	38%	50%	100%

**Table B.51.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
1	7	8
12%	88%	100%

**Table B.51.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
5	1	1	1	8
64%	12%	12%	12%	100%

**52. Cases Closed between 180 days - 1 Year of the Filing Date****Table B.52.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	3	16	0	19
0%	16%	84%	0%	100%

**Table B.52.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
15	4	19
80%	20%	100%

**Table B.52.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
4	9	1	5	19
20%	48%	5%	27%	100%

### 53. Cases Closed Between 1 - 2 Years of the Filing Date

**Table B.53.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	0	8	0	8
0%	0%	100%	0%	100%

**Table B.53.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
8	0	8
100%	0%	100%

**Table B.53.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
1	2	1	4	8
12%	25%	12%	50%	100%

## 54. Cases Closed Between 2 -4 Years of the Filing Date

**Table B.54.A Responsive Pleadings**

<b>Answer/ Waiver</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>No Responsive Pleading</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	0	0	0	0
0%	0%	0%	0%	100%

**Table B.54.B Contested / Uncontested**

<b>Contested</b>	<b>Uncontested</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	0	0
0%	0%	100%

**Table B.54.C Disposition**

<b>Uncontested Final Hearing</b>	<b>Contested Final Hearing / Trial</b>	<b>Voluntary Dismissal</b>	<b>Dismissal Lack of Prosecution</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	0	0	0	0
0%	0%	0%	0%	100%

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