

Court Adopts Revised Integrated Family Services Plan

The Marion County Family Law Advisory Committee (LFLAC) developed a plan pursuant to ORS 3.434 to coordinate the provision of services to families in domestic relations and other family court proceedings in 1998. The plan was recently updated by the LFLAC to reflect the court's current state of services, and adopted by the Marion County Bench. It provides a good overview of services offered to families in domestic relations cases, and establishes a protocol of how multiple cases involving the same family are to be coordinated.

Case Coordination.

Some highlights from the case coordination protocol involve the interface between Family Abuse Prevention Act (FAPA) and custody cases, and criminal and juvenile cases. Starting with FAPA cases, they may be assigned to an individual calendar judge if there is a pending domestic relations proceeding involving the same parents. Otherwise, any FAPA hearing will be set on the Miscellaneous Calendar. If the domestic relations proceeding is filed after the FAPA and the respondent wants the FAPA hearing heard by the assigned individual calendar judge, the protocol requires the respondent to do the following:

- request consolidation from the assigned judge;
- obtain a new hearing date and waive statutory deadlines, satisfactory to the Court and the petitioner; and
- notify the petitioner and the Miscellaneous Judge's staff.

Forms for this process are posted on the court's website at: www.ojd.state.or.us/mar/programsandservices/CourtFormsforAttorneys.htm

Frequently, the same parents are involved in both juvenile and criminal cases, sometimes stemming from the same incident. If the child is placed out of home, the general rule is the criminal and juvenile case are assigned to an individual calendar judge downtown. Sometimes the court may not be aware of the related case. Attorneys can assist the court by informing the judge at the annex, juvenile or downtown of any related cases. This will help keep orders and services consistent, and may save clients money and hassle later in the life of the case.

Service Integration.

The LFLAC is still working on how to best integrate outside services that are provided to families in the court system. In a few specific areas the court will be moving forward over the next several months:

Unbundled Legal Services (Discrete Task Representation). Attorneys who would like to advertise unbundled legal services may do so through the Family Law Department. Simply fill out the Attorney Profile form provided on the court's website at: www.ojd.state.or.us/mar/programsandservices/barupdates.htm and send it to Megan Hassen at the Marion County Circuit Court.

Mediators and Arbitrators. Court approved mediators and arbitrators will soon be able to

advertise their services through the Family Law Department and the court's website. More information will be forthcoming soon.

Domestic Relations Cases with Young Children. Effective February 1, 2006, domestic relations litigants are required to state "young child involved" in the first pleading if the woman is pregnant or there is a joint child age three or younger. The LFLAC is developing a case processing protocol for these cases designed to preserve and enhance existing attachments in an effort to improve child well being.

To review the Integrated Family Services Plan in its entirety along with other important local bar updates, visit the court's website at: www.ojd.state.or.us/mar/programsandservices/barupdates.htm Questions or comments may be directed to Megan Hassen at megan.hassen@ojd.state.or.us or 503.584.7754.