

**THE ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA**

**CASE NO. 19-1
(Court Administration)**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
NO. 19-03
(Companion to AO Nos. 17-08 and 17-08 A1)
(Rescinding AO No. 16-06)**

**IN RE: ASSIGNMENT OF CASES
INVOLVING CHILDREN KNOWN OR
SUSPECTED OF BEING VICTIMS OF
HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE
UNIFIED CHILDREN'S COURT
DIVISION**

WHEREAS, the Florida Supreme Court in *In re Report of the Family Court Steering Committee*, 794 So. 2d 518 (Fla. 2001), endorsed the guiding principles and characteristics of the model family court developed by the Family Court Steering Committee and reaffirmed its goal of the creation of a fully integrated, comprehensive approach to handling all cases involving children and families; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Administrative Order No. 17-08, the Unified Children's Court Plan was reaffirmed and procedures were established to implement the Unified Children's Court Division in the Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida to provide a comprehensive, coordinated approach to addressing family law matters; and

WHEREAS, it has been determined, that in the interest of judicial economy, the Chief Judge finds it necessary to establish procedures for expeditious and efficient resolution of cases involving children known or suspected of being a victim of human trafficking as defined in section 787.06(2)(d), Florida Statutes ("Human Trafficking cases"); and

WHEREAS, specialized training and expertise of the judiciary is required in order to appropriately handle Human Trafficking cases; and

WHEREAS, the policies and procedures outlined in Administrative Order 17-08 were meant to be elastic so as to provide the greatest degree of flexibility and allow for fine-tuning to the extent necessary to effectuate efficient and proper procedures for the Court and thus subject to change at any time; and

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to the authority vested in me as Chief Judge of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida under Rule 2.215, Florida Rules of Judicial

Administration, it is hereby **ORDERED** that:

I. ESTABLISHMENT OF OPERATIONAL PROTOCOL

The following operational protocol is hereby established for cases involving children known or suspected of being a victim of human trafficking when Related Cases are identified:

A. Identification –Human Trafficking Cases will be identified by:

i. Notice of Related Cases– In accordance with Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.545(d), a fully completed Notice of Related Cases shall be filed with the initial pleading by the filing attorney or self-represented petitioner in each of the Related Cases that are currently open and pending with the court and served on all other parties in each of the Related Cases. Parties may file joint notices. To the extent that any issues of confidentiality apply, all legal requirements shall be observed, including any requirements as set forth in Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.420. Parties shall file supplemental notices as Related Cases become known or reasonably ascertainable.

ii. The AOC Unified Children’s Court Division, in conjunction with the Clerk of Court, shall be responsible for identifying Related Cases upon the filing of a new case or one reopened post-judgment when provided with notice or a court order. Upon identification, the Clerk’s Office shall enter Related Cases into the Related Case and Case Cross Reference fields in Odyssey, and link all related cases together in the system.

iii. Judges and court staff, including, but not limited to, Family Self- Help Program

iv. System and agency partners

B. Notification: The AOC Unified Children’s Court Division shall be notified of these Related Cases by any of the methods indicated above.

C. Assignment of cases: The following Unified Children’s Court Division Human Trafficking Cases shall be specifically assigned in the following manner:

1. **Open Dependency/TPR case designated as Human Trafficking where there is a related, open Juvenile Delinquency, Domestic Relations, or Injunction for Protection case.** Related cases shall be filed in or transferred to the Human Trafficking Section of the Unified Children’s Court Division. The related cases shall be heard before a designated judge to handle all Human Trafficking cases in the circuit, who will serve as a specially sitting Unified Children’s Court Judge for

purposes of handling these related cases through case disposition and for all post-judgment matters.

2. Open Delinquency case designated as Human Trafficking where there is a related, open Juvenile Dependency/TPR, Domestic Relations, or Injunction for Protection case. Related cases shall be filed in or transferred to the Human Trafficking Section of the Unified Children's Court Division. The related cases shall be heard before a designated judge to handle all Human Trafficking cases in the circuit, who will serve as a specially sitting Unified Children's Court Judge for purposes of handling these related cases through case disposition and for all post-judgment matters.

- D. Training: In addition to the requirements for judges assigned to the Unified Children's Court Division set forth in Administrative Order No. 17-08, any judge assigned to the Human Trafficking court, either as the primary judge or as the back-up judge, will have six (6) months from the date of the assignment to complete at least an eight (8) hour course given by the National Judicial Institute on Domestic Child Sex Trafficking or a comparable course approved by the Administrative Judge of the Unified Children's Court Division.
- E. In the event the Unified Children's Court Division Judge designated to handle all Human Trafficking cases is unavailable, the Administrative Judge of the Unified Children's Court Division shall determine who shall handle the Unified Children's Court Human Trafficking Case(s) in his or her stead.

II. INTERDIVISIONAL COOPERATION

All divisions in the Eleventh Judicial Circuit shall work cooperatively together to ensure that multiple judicial determination concerning a single family do not conflict with one another.

This Administrative Order is a companion to Administrative Order No. 17-08 and No. 17-08 A1.

This Administrative Order shall take effect immediately upon execution and shall remain in effect until further order of the Court. Administrative Order No. 16-06 and any amendments thereto, are hereby rescinded and held for naught.

DONE AND ORDERED in Chambers at Miami-Dade County, Florida, this 17th day of June 2019.

**BERTILA SOTO, CHIEF JUDGE
ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA**