

District Court of Tulsa County

Tulsa County Family Court Program

Third Quarter Report

2010

Report by:
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Tulsa County Family Court

Domestic Judges

FD Docket A
The Honorable Carl Funderburk
Clerk: Heather Silvestre
Courtroom: 348

FD Docket B
The Honorable Wilma Palmer
Clerk: KimberLee Rutledge
Courtroom: 378

FD Docket C
The Honorable Mark Barcus
Clerk: Linda McMurray
Courtroom: 605

FD Docket D
The Honorable William Musseman, Jr.
Clerk: Suzi Collins
Courtroom: 349

FD Docket E
The Honorable Rodney Sparkman
Clerk: Shana Grandstaff
Courtroom: 379

Protective Order Judge

The Honorable Charles Hogshead
Clerk: Kimberly Wiley
Courtroom: 111

Family Court Services

Family Court Case Coordinator

Nicole W. Kirkland, MSW
Room: 607

Family Resource Coordinator

Cheryl Conklin
Room: 607

DHS Child Support Services

DHS Attorney

Ross Aston
Room: 356

Tulsa County Family Court Program

Third Quarter 2010

Tulsa County's Family Court Program provided triage for the Family Court Judges by reducing court involvement and providing services and resources to litigants. The following report illustrates the specialized dockets and services in place for Tulsa County.

Parenting Plan Conference Docket

All Dissolution of Marriage, Legal Separation, and Paternity cases involving minor children are scheduled on the PPC docket two to three weeks after the petition is filed.

In July of 2010, the Supreme Court cut the District Court budget causing Tulsa County to lose their Family Court Referee. The Parenting Plan Conference (PPC) docket was managed by the Referee. Therefore, for third quarter, the PPC docket was rotated by the five (5) Domestic Judges. Data for this docket is incomplete for this quarter.

Quarter	Dockets	Litigants Docketed	Litigants Present	Data collected on the PPC Survey.	
				Pro Se Litigants (One or both sides self-represented)	Children Affected
1 st Quarter	33	1,654 (827 Cases)	998 (60%)	224 (35%)	1,269
2 nd Quarter	31	1,722 (861 Cases)	1,198 (70%)	287 (37%)	1,433
3 rd Quarter	45	1,772 (886 Cases)	---	280 (36%)	1,462

1. The five (5) Domestic Judges:

- Helped families understand the effects of divorce and conflict on their children and encouraged families to create a Temporary Order (TO) Agreement;
- Pro Se (self-represented) cases without an attorney on both sides were sent to the Family Resource Coordinator (FRC) to achieve financial and visitation agreements;
- Cases with at least one attorney involved, that could not reach an agreement, conferenced with the Judge. If an agreement could not be reached the Judge referred the case to their Assigned Judge to schedule a Temporary Order Hearing;
- All cases were given a Scheduling Order that outlined when the Helping Children Cope with Divorce seminar, discovery, and mediation must be completed and were given a 120 day status date.

Quarter	Cases Stricken or Passed	TO Submitted	TO to be Submitted	Conference with Referee	Pro Se cases sent to FRC
1 st Quarter	58%	15%	3%	15%	9%
2 nd Quarter	56%	16%	5%	13%	10%
3 rd Quarter	---	---	---	---	9%

After conferencing with the Judge:

Quarter	Cases Stricken or Passed	TO Submitted	Referred to TO Hearing
1 st Quarter	27%	69%	4%
2 nd Quarter	22%	65%	13%
3 rd Quarter	---	---	---

2. Family Resource Coordinator:

- a. Provided community resources to all litigants;
- b. Distributed the Parenting Plan Conference Survey to all litigants. Results on page 5;
- c. Worked with Pro Se (self-represented) litigants at the PPC docket to achieve financial and visitation agreements (both sides must be Pro Se).

Quarter	Total Cases	Total Temporary Agreements
1 st Quarter	82	73 (89%)
2 nd Quarter	101	95 (94%)
3 rd Quarter	85	78 (92%)

This resulted in 92% of the self-represented litigants coming to financial and visitation agreements.

3. Family Court Case Coordinator:

- a. Verified services with the Department of Human Services (DHS) on all cases scheduled for the PPC docket;
- b. Case data submitted to the DHS – Child Support Enforcement office each week.

Quarter	Total Cases Verified	Cases with DHS Services	Disclaimers Signed and Filed
1 st Quarter	505	171 (34%)	334 (66%)
2 nd Quarter	560	198 (35%)	362 (65%)
3 rd Quarter	576	179 (31%)	397 (69%)

This resulted in sending 31% of the cases scheduled on the PPC docket to the DHS Child Support Attorney, located in the courthouse, for review and signage.

The Department of Human Services is now verifying all cases scheduled on the PPC docket and filing disclaimers for cases where DHS has no interest.

Parenting Plan Conference Survey Totals

3rd Quarter 2010

	Yes	No	N/A	Blank
1. I received the Tulsa County Family Court instruction packet at the beginning of my divorce process.	475 60.89%	193 24.74%	100 12.82%	12 2.53%
2. The instructions I received in the Tulsa County Family Court instruction packet were useful.	460 58.97%	11 1.41%	280 35.89%	29 3.71%
3. The Judge did a good job of reminding us to keep conflict away from our children.	772 98.97%	2 0.25%	3 0.38%	3 0.38%
4. Did the DVD show how children are affected when parents do not work together?	763 98.32%	7 0.89%	6 0.76%	4 0.51%
5. The Family Resource Coordinator was beneficial.	748 95.89%	3 0.38%	21 2.69%	8 1.02%
6. I learned about community resources that are available to help me.	744 95.38%	12 1.53%	20 2.56%	4 0.51%
7. I am willing to work with my co-parent to develop a plan for parenting our children.	738 94.61%	8 1.02%	23 2.94%	11 1.41%
8. I am willing to agree to a Temporary Order.	703 90.12%	15 1.92%	52 6.66%	10 1.28%
9. I am represented by an attorney.	493 63.20%	280 35.89%	5 .64%	2 0.25%
10. My relationship with my co-parent may improve because of the information I learned at the PPC.	616 78.97%	80 10.25%	64 8.20%	20 2.56%
11. I plan to use the information I received today to help my children.	756 96.92%	4 0.51%	8 1.02%	12 1.53%
12. Total children affected by Dissolution of Marriage, Legal Separation, or Paternity action.	1,462			

Gender:

Male: 46.27%
Female: 53.89%

Age:

18 and under: 1.27%
19 to 35: 58.23%
36 to 64: 37.52%
65 and up: 0.24%

Race:

African American: 9.55%
Asian: 0.91%
Hispanic: 6.92%
Native American: 9.61%
White: 70.91%
Other: 1.18%

Total Litigants Scheduled on Docket: 1,772

Total Surveys Collected: 780

Helping Children Cope with Divorce Seminar

All Dissolution of Marriage, Legal Separation, or Paternity cases involving minor children are required to take the Helping Children Cope with Divorce seminar.

The goal of this seminar is to help parents manage conflict, learn effective parenting skills, avoid pitfalls and problems, and understand the typical reactions to divorce by developmental age. The following data is from the program evaluation given at the end of each seminar.

	2 nd Quarter	3 rd Quarter
Number of parents that attended the seminar:	1,076	1,045
1. Overall, I found the seminar helpful:	84%	88%
2. The information I learned today will help me with my co-parent:	77%	83%
3. The information I learned today will help me understand my children:	82%	85%
4. It would help to attend this program before the divorce was filed:	58%	59%
5. This seminar will help reduce conflict between co-parents:	64%	72%

Agreed-To/Default Dissolution Docket

All Dissolution of Marriage, Legal Separation, and Paternity cases where both parties agree or do not contest may attend the Agreed-To Docket. The five (5) Domestic Judges rotate the daily Agreed-To docket each week. This docket is held once a day and averages 28 cases per week.

Family Resource Coordinator:

Assisted the five (5) Domestic Judges, using a check list to sort Pro Se (self-represented) litigant paperwork before seeing the Judge.

Quarter	Total Pro Se Cases Agree	Total Pro Se Cases Processed to the Judge
1 st Quarter	365	250 (69%)
2 nd Quarter	481	312 (65%)
3 rd Quarter	377	261 (69%)

This resulted in 69% of the cases being processed to the Judge and preventing 31% from seeing the Judge with incorrect or missing paperwork.

High Conflict/Complex Cases

High conflict/complex cases are identified at the Parenting Plan Conference docket or at any stage of the dissolution or paternity process by the five (5) Domestic Judges. The Family Court Case Coordinator is assigned to a case by Court Order and only works with cases involving minor children.

The Family Court Case Coordinator:

1. Provided case management, mediation, and resources to high conflict/complex families;
2. Assisted the Family Court Judges by communicating with attorneys and litigants to move high conflict cases to resolution;
3. Decreased conflict, number of court appearances, and time involved with the court:

Quarter	New Cases Ordered	Total Cases Closed	Trial: Decision Filed	Consent Filed	Dismissed	Total Cases Pending	Children Affected
1 st Quarter	10	4	0	4	0	33	86
2 nd Quarter	10	6	0	6	0	37	96
3 rd Quarter	9	8	3	3	2	38	102

These services helped reduce conflict for 38 families, including 102 minor children. The Family Court Case Coordinator helped reduce conflict by providing the litigants with information and resources, facilitated communication amongst the parties, and kept cases moving forward through docket management.

In October of 2010 we will start the new Case Management Docket. The Family Court Case Coordinator will now work solely with the Judge for FD Docket C to manage this docket. Data for this docket will be collected and will replace this section of the quarterly report.

Protective Order Docket

All Protective Order cases are scheduled on the Protective Order docket. This docket is managed by the Protective Order Judge:

- Assisted the Domestic Judges by ruling on all Protective Order cases;
- The Family Resource Coordinator provided community resources to all litigants;
- Averaged 16 dockets per month.

Total Protective Orders Filed:

1 st Quarter	2 nd Quarter	3 rd Quarter
1,022	1,229	1,172

Court Watch observed 661 Protective Order cases (1st Quarter data only):

- 44% Dismissed
 - 18% Plaintiff failed to appear
 - 17% Plaintiff and Defendant failed to appear
 - 18% Granted
 - 28% named children on the PO
 - 13% Continued
 - 13% Alias EPO Continued
 - 5% Consolidated
 - 5% Other Action (i.e. Motion)
- Self-represented litigants:**
- 80% Plaintiff Pro Se
 - 67% Defendant Pro Se

2010 Family Court Data

The following information applies to the five (5) Domestic Judges.

Total Pending Cases:

1 st Quarter	2 nd Quarter	3 rd Quarter
7,190	6,822	6,928

Case Processing Time (1st Quarter data only):

The tables below illustrate the number of new filings for first quarter by Judge and case type, along with detailed information regarding the status of these cases.

Judge	Family and Domestic (FD)	Paternity (FP)	Protective Order (PO)	1 ST Quarter Filings
FD Docket A	199	20	22	241
FD Docket B	199	19	25	243
FD Docket C	197	18	33	248
FD Docket D	198	18	23	239
FD Docket E	198	19	32	249
TOTAL	991	94	135	1,220

1 st Quarter Filings	Cases Closed	Trial: Decision Filed	Consent Filed	Consol.	Dismissed	Months to Closure	Cases Reopened	Total Cases Pending	Months Pending
1,220	799 (65%)	14 (1%)	638 (52%)	7 (1%)	139 (11%)	3	11 (1%)	432 (35%)	8

As of third quarter, the five (5) Domestic Judges were able to close 65% of their first quarter filings within 3 months.

Data compiled from The Oklahoma State Courts Network (OSCN).