

Supreme Court of Florida

No. AOSC14-64

IN RE: PARENTING COORDINATOR APPLICATION FORM
AND TRAINING STANDARDS

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

In In re Report of the Family Court Steering Committee, 794 So. 2d 518, 522 (Fla. 2001), this Court adopted a guiding principle encouraging a family court process to “empower families through skills development, assist them to resolve their own disputes, provide access to appropriate services, and offer a variety of dispute resolution forums where the family can resolve problems without additional emotional trauma.” One form of dispute resolution that has been very successful in the State of Florida in family cases is mediation. Mediation is but one form of dispute resolution that is available. The Florida Legislature, in adopting section 61.125, Florida Statutes, and this Court recognize parenting coordination as another viable method of dispute resolution in the family arena

and, as such, helps fulfill the court system’s vision of supporting “a variety of dispute resolution forums.”¹

Section 61.125 Florida Statutes, became effective on October 1, 2009, and provides for the parenting coordination process. Subsection 61.125(1), Florida Statutes, defines the purpose of parenting coordination as follows:

[T]o provide a child-focused alternative dispute resolution process whereby a parenting coordinator assists the parents in creating or implementing a parenting plan by facilitating the resolution of disputes between the parents by providing education, making recommendations, and, with the prior approval of the parents and the court, making limited decisions within the scope of the court's order of referral.

Section 61.125, Florida Statutes, establishes the standards for the referral of cases to parenting coordinators by the court, qualifications for and disqualifications of parenting coordinators, fees, confidentiality of the process, emergency situation reporting requirements, and liability limitations of parenting coordinators.

Implementation of the statute on a statewide, uniform basis is vital to ensure the quality of both parenting coordinators and the parenting coordination process.

The Committee on Alternative Dispute Resolution Rules and Policy (Committee), through its Joint Parenting Coordination Subcommittee, considered and reviewed the parenting coordination statute and received input from parenting coordination training providers, approved parenting coordinators, and subject

1. Long-Range Strategic Plan for the Florida Judicial Branch, p. 1 (2009), The Florida Supreme Court Task Force on Judicial Branch Planning; available at http://www.flcourts.org/gen_public/stratplan/2009LongRangePlanMain.shtml.

matters specialists. The Committee recommended the adoption of the attached Parenting Coordination Training Standards. The Supreme Court concurs and adopts the recommendations of the Committee with regard to statewide uniform promulgation of parenting coordination training standards. Accordingly, this administrative order hereby establishes the following administrative procedures:

A. Administrative Responsibility

Administrative responsibility for the implementation of section 61.125, Florida Statutes, and its attendant rules, qualifications and procedures, and this administrative order shall be placed with the chief judge or his/her designee in each circuit or with the Florida Dispute Resolution Center of the Office of the State Courts Administrator (DRC) as further outlined in this administrative order or in any Supreme Court opinions that may be issued. It is the intention of this Court that such implementation shall be uniform throughout the state. This uniformity shall be accomplished through the use of standardized processes, procedures, and forms.

B. Qualifications and Disqualifications

Parenting coordinators shall be qualified and disqualified pursuant to subsections 61.125(4) and (5), Florida Statutes, as follows:

1. The chief judge or designee(s) in each judicial circuit shall review each application and determine which individuals applying to serve as parenting coordinators meet the qualifications under section 61.125,

Florida Statutes, to be included on the roster of qualified parenting coordinators of that circuit.

2. Each judicial circuit may conduct a criminal background investigation and make inquiries necessary to verify an applicant's eligibility to be included on the roster.
3. The chief judge or designee(s) in each judicial circuit shall establish a process to periodically review whether a parenting coordinator continues to be qualified and shall remove a parenting coordinator immediately from the roster if the coordinator is no longer qualified.
4. Any appeal pertaining to a parenting coordinator's inclusion on or removal from the roster shall be heard and decided by the chief judge or designee(s) in that judicial circuit, whose decision shall be final.
5. A uniform statewide parenting coordination application form is adopted and attached hereto. This application form shall be used in every circuit.

C. Training

To ensure that all parenting coordinator training courses meet the requirements of section 61.125, Florida Statutes, and qualify pursuant to the Parenting Coordination Training Standards attached hereto, the DRC shall be responsible for the review and approval of all parenting coordination training programs. Trainers desiring to offer parenting coordination training must submit

their program to the DRC for approval. The DRC shall be responsible for monitoring compliance with the standards and maintaining appropriate records on approved parenting coordination training programs, including approved materials, agenda, application, trainer resumes, and any changes submitted. The Committee is directed to periodically review the training program standards and recommend amendments to this Court, as appropriate.

An exception to the requirement that a parenting coordinator take an approved training will be granted to those individuals who have completed a parenting coordination training course and are currently qualified by a court since the 2009 adoption of section 61.125, Florida Statutes, and who re-apply to be qualified on or before December 31, 2014.

D. Roster of Parenting Coordinators

Each judicial circuit shall establish and maintain a roster of parenting coordinators from which the court may appoint a qualified parenting coordinator. Chief judges or their designee(s) shall not institute additional requirements to be on a circuit's roster other than those listed in section 61.125, Florida Statutes, and this administrative order.

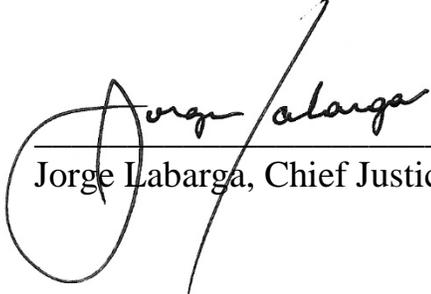
E. Application Form

The standardized application form that shall be used by each judicial circuit for parenting coordinators who wish to apply to be qualified as a parenting

coordinator by the chief judge of the judicial circuit is attached to this administrative order.

The responsibility for the implementation and qualification procedures and use of the form contained in this administrative order, as well as the attached Parenting Coordination Training Standards, are hereby adopted, incorporated herein by reference, and shall be effective upon the signing of this order.

DONE AND ORDERED at Tallahassee, Florida, on November 14, 2014.



Jorge Labarga, Chief Justice

ATTEST:



John A. Tomasino, Clerk of Court

