

State of New Jersey
Administrative Office of the Courts

Probation Child Support Enforcement Operations Manual	Volume A	Revised: 01/06/23
Page 1 of 7	Organizational Structures and Interagency Relationships	Section 1003

1003 Organizational Structures and Interagency Relationships

A. Vicinage Administration

To facilitate the efficient operation of the courts, the state is divided into 15 geographic regions known as *vicinages*. Each vicinage is managed by an Assignment Judge (AJ) who reports to the Chief Justice. The AJ, the chief judicial officer of the vicinage, is responsible for the general supervision of trial judges, administration of vicinage personnel and budget, implementation of the rules, policies and directives of the Supreme Court, and the overall management of trial calendars.

Each vicinage also has a Trial Court Administrator (TCA) who oversees the administrative aspects of local trial court operations. The TCA, the chief operating officer of the vicinage, is responsible for managing finances, staff, equipment, training, facilities, court reporting, court support, juries, language services as well as county and state government relations, and reports to the AJ.

Together, the AJ and TCA form the executive component – the leaders of the judges and court staff respectively. In broad terms, the executive component provides oversight and leadership within the vicinage to ensure that (1) all staff and resources are devoted to achieving the Judiciary's goals and objectives in an efficient manner and (2) the highest quality services are provided to the public. To this end, the AJ and TCA work together to balance vicinage needs and resources, implement judiciary policies, guide division activities, facilitate vicinage communications, oversee intergovernmental relations, and manage case flow. The executive component is the final decision-making authority in terms of vicinage administration.

To assist the executive component in managing local trial court operations, each vicinage has a management team composed of the AJ, TCA, Presiding Judges (PJ), and the heads of the other divisions of court staff. Acting in an advisory capacity to the executive component, the

State of New Jersey
Administrative Office of the Courts

Probation Child Support Enforcement Operations Manual	Volume A	Revised: 01/06/23
Page 2 of 7	Organizational Structures and Interagency Relationships	Section 1003

management team considers budget priorities, operational problems, policies, and overall vicinage plans.

There are 9 principal divisions of the Judiciary in each vicinage: Criminal, Civil, Family, Municipal, Probation, Finance, Human Resources, General Operations, and Information Technology. Criminal, Civil, Family, Municipal, and General Equity, a part of the Civil Division, are each headed by a PJ. In addition to judicial duties, the PJ is responsible for case flow management, implementing Supreme Court rules, policies, and procedures within the division and managing the division's budget and staffing. Each division's support staff and resources are administered by a Division Manager who works under the direction of a PJ and/or a TCA.

B. Family Division

The Family Division is vested with the authority to hear actions in which the principal claim is unique to and arises out of a family or family-type relationship.

Family Division staff are responsible for all pre-disposition functions in family-related matters including the Title IV-D application process, complaint filing, collecting case information, creating initial case records, and preparing and scheduling establishment actions for court. The Family Division may conduct conferences in an attempt to resolve the paternity and support issues without the need for a court appearance. Once a support order is entered payable through the court, the Family Division transfers the case to Probation Child Support Enforcement (PCSE) staff for monitoring. Post-disposition motions and applications are filed in the Family Division.

The case processing functions of the Family Division are supervised by a Family Division Manager (FDM). The FDM and the Family Division PJ comprise the executive component of the division. The division's executive component reports to the AJ and the TCA.

State of New Jersey
Administrative Office of the Courts

Probation Child Support Enforcement Operations Manual	Volume A	Revised: 01/06/23
Page 3 of 7	Organizational Structures and Interagency Relationships	Section 1003

The Child Support Hearing Officer Program (CSHOP), managed by each local Family Division, is comprised of Child Support Hearing Officers (CSHOs) who hear child support cases. The authority and duties of CSHOs are set forth in R. 5:25-3. The purpose of the program is to provide quick access to the court (expedited process) for families filing applications for the financial support of their children. CSHOs are authorized to hear child support matters pursuant to Title IV-D of the federal Social Security Act. CSHOs take testimony, review documents, consider evidence, and make recommendations to a Superior Court judge to establish, modify, and enforce support obligations. A judge reviews all CSHO recommendations. Appropriate recommendations are signed by a judge and become court orders.

C. Interdivisional Post Hearing Intake Team

The Interdivisional Post Hearing Intake Team works with both the Family and Probation Division. Once an order is entered, the Interdivisional Post Hearing Intake Team meet with the parties, review, and explain the order, and update New Jersey Kids Deserve Support (NJKiDS) accordingly.

D. Probation Division

Probation is responsible for post-disposition activities including the supervision of offenders, the collection of fines, restitution, and support obligations as directed by the court.

The Probation Division in each vicinage is headed by a Probation Division Manager who reports to the AJ and the TCA. Probation is divided into five functional groups: Adult Supervision, Recovery Court, Juvenile Supervision, Community Service and Collections (CSAC), and Child Support Enforcement. Each of the functional units are managed by a Probation Assistant Division Manager.

The PCSE Unit monitors and enforces all support orders which are payable through the New Jersey Family Support Payment Center (NJFSPC). PCSE

State of New Jersey
Administrative Office of the Courts

Probation Child Support Enforcement Operations Manual	Volume A	Revised: 01/06/23
Page 4 of 7	Organizational Structures and Interagency Relationships	Section 1003

works cooperatively with numerous local, state, and federal agencies in fulfilling its objectives. County PCSE offices may be organized differently depending on caseload size and staffing levels.

E. Vicinage Finance Division

The Vicinage Finance Divisions are responsible for fiscal administration, budgets and spending plans, financial analyses, audits, purchasing, administration of fixed assets, and court-held funds for all divisions within a vicinage.

Fiscal functions related to child support include audits and case modifications into NJKiDS and processing requests related to holds on cases.

Court-ordered payments taken at judicial facilities are processed by Finance in which staff reconcile and submit to the NJFSPC.

F. County Sheriff

The sheriffs are county employed law enforcement officers who have entered into cooperative agreements with the Office of Child Support Services (OCSS). The sheriffs are responsible for serving process, executing warrants, and providing court security.

G. Administrative Office of the Courts

The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) is the Judiciary's administrative arm, which provides management support and coordination. It supports the trial courts by identifying the best techniques for accomplishing judicial functions, evaluating, and monitoring trial court performance, training judges and court support staff, providing communications services and counsel, and providing technical assistance. Other AOC functions include developing statewide automation, investigating, and resolving complaints, implementing special projects,

State of New Jersey
Administrative Office of the Courts

Probation Child Support Enforcement Operations Manual	Volume A	Revised: 01/06/23
Page 5 of 7	Organizational Structures and Interagency Relationships	Section 1003

collecting, and evaluating statistical data, preparing budget estimates for the operation of the courts, staffing judicial committees, and coordinating efforts to promote statewide uniformity of forms, practices, and procedures in trial courts.

The AOC is headed by the Administrative Director of the Courts who reports to the Chief Justice. The Administrative Director is responsible for the overall administration of the courts including the enforcement of the rules, policies, and directives of the Supreme Court. Their objectives are accomplished through the directors of each respective division.

With the exception of General Equity, each division of the trial courts has a complementary division in the AOC aimed at providing the services noted above. AOC divisions are managed by directors and assistant directors who report to the Administrative Director of the Courts. Directors guide each division's activities on a statewide basis by communicating judiciary policies, developing implementation procedures, addressing proposed legislation and court rules, assisting in the development of goals and objectives, and providing technical assistance. For example, Trial Court Services – Family Division and the Office of Management and Administrative Services (OMAS) of the AOC provide county-level support to the Family and Finance Divisions, respectively.

Under the direction of the Director of the Office of Probation Services, within the AOC is the Probation Child Support Enforcement (PCSE) Unit. PCSE assists county-level staff by providing technical assistance and training, disseminating information on best child support practices, developing standard policies and procedures, implementing special projects, providing management information, and negotiating Title IV-D federal-funding cooperative agreements. Additionally, AOC PCSE staff monitor local office's compliance with federal child support regulations and, if needed, coordinate any corrective action.

AOC PCSE Unit also manages Client Services, Central Operations which incorporates the Intergovernmental Central Registry (ICR) and the Call

State of New Jersey
Administrative Office of the Courts

Probation Child Support Enforcement Operations Manual	Volume A	Revised: 01/06/23
Page 6 of 7	Organizational Structures and Interagency Relationships	Section 1003

Management Unit (CMU). The ICR client services team assists all customers including other jurisdictions. It receives and enters into NJKiDS incoming petitions and inquiries prior to cases being forwarded to the vicinages.

H. New Jersey Department of Human Services

The New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Family Development (DFD), Office of Child Support Services (OCSS) is the organizational unit responsible for administration of the state's child support program by ensuring that services required under the state plan are provided. DFD monitors compliance with federal and state child support authorities and performance standards, maintains the federally certified automated child support system and accompanying equipment, oversees the State Disbursement Unit (SDU) and centralized customer service call center, and coordinates federal financial participation for the program. DFD also directly manages the NJKiDS system, Federal Case Registry (FCR), Federal Parent Locator System (FLPS), National Directory of New Hires (NDNH), State Directory of New Hires (SDNH), Employer Services Center (ESC), and the Administrative Enforcement Unit (AEU). Additionally, through its contract with the New Jersey Child Support Institute (NJCSI), a statewide child support training program has been developed by DFD. With sites located in the north, central, and south regions of the state, NJCSI provides training to all child support staff.

To achieve its objectives, OCSS enters into cooperative agreements with local and state agencies which provide services in exchange for federal funding. OCSS has entered into a cooperative agreement with the New Jersey Judiciary to provide for the establishment and enforcement portions of the program. Other agreements include the state approved vendors for centralized payment processing, system maintenance and operations, location services, voluntary paternity acknowledgement services, employer services, and the local county sheriffs' office for execution of warrants.

State of New Jersey
Administrative Office of the Courts

Probation Child Support Enforcement Operations Manual	Volume A	Revised: 01/06/23
Page 7 of 7	Organizational Structures and Interagency Relationships	Section 1003

I. County Welfare Agency

The Child Support and Paternity Units of the County Welfare Agencies (CWAs)/Board of Social Services are overseen by the Division of Family Development (DFD), which represent the state in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (Title IV-A of the Social Security Act), Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P)/foster care (Title IV-E of the Social Security Act), and Medicaid matters. CWAs also perform locate functions, facilitate genetic testing, and process triennial reviews.

J. Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement

The Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) is a division of the Administration for Children and Families of the federal Department of Health and Human Services. While states have been delegated the operational aspects of the child support program, OCSE controls the administrative, regulatory, and technical aspects of the Title IV-D program. In short, OCSE is responsible for making sure that states comply with all Title IV-D laws. While OCSE doesn't provide services directly to families they partner with state agencies to encourage parental responsibility so that children receive support from both parents. The OCSE also conducts audits of state programs for compliance and funds state Title IV-D administrative expenses through quarterly grants.