



LOCAL PROFESSIONALISM PANEL REPORT FORM

Chief Judge of Circuit:	Christopher N. Patterson
Name of Submitter:	Christopher Butler
Date:	12/7/2023

***Reports must be filed by June 15 and December 15 each year.**

SC 2023-0884 - Appendix A Code for Resolving Professionalism Referrals 3.7 Reporting

- a) Each LPP must file a written report with the chief judge of its circuit, the Florida Supreme Court, and The Florida Bar identifying all professionalism referrals received against a member of The Florida Bar in June and December of each calendar year.
- b) The biannual reports must include the following information for each referral for the six (6) calendar months preceding the month in which the report is due:
 1. The date of the referral;
 2. The circuit in which the issue arose;
 3. A short summary detailing the substance of the referral;
 4. The relationship of the respondent voluntarily participated in the process;
 5. Whether or not the respondent voluntarily participated in the process;
 6. The resolution, if any, of the referral; and
 7. Whether there were previous referrals against the respondent.
- c) The reports must not include identifying information for the respondent or the party who submitted the referral.

INFORMATION FOR SUBMITTERS

1. **Purpose and Use:** This form collects information about your Circuit's Local Professionalism Panel and its activity for the last six (6) months. This form also asks for updates to the contact information for your Local Professionalism Panel. The information about your Circuit's Local Professionalism Panel will be used to update the Center's Local Professionalism Panel contact list, as well as to gauge how each Circuit is carrying out panel activities.

2. **Reporting Period:** Reports must be filed by June 15th and December 15th and include information for the six (6) calendar months preceding the month in which the report is due.

3. **Where to Submit:** Submit this form and any attachments by email to cfp@floridabar.org or by regular mail to:

The Florida Bar
Henry Latimer Center for Professionalism
651 E. Jefferson Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

4. **Questions:** Direct all questions about this form to cfp@floridabar.org.

**June Reports should include information from January 1 to June 15.
December Reports should include information from June 16 to December 15.**

LOCAL PROFESSIONALISM PANEL QUESTIONS

Please complete the information below regarding any activity within your Local Professionalism Panel. Additional pages may be attached as needed.

- 1. Please describe the process by which complaints are addressed.** You may attach a link to the complaint form or link to where information is located on your website that advises the consumers, attorneys, and judges how to file a complaint.

At present, complaints are accepted via email by the chair of the Panel. After reviewing the complaint, the chair either calls a meeting of the entire Panel or assigns the complaint to a member of the Panel for further investigation prior to bringing the matter before the entire Panel. The Panel will decide whether the complaint is best suited to be addressed with the respondent on either a one-on-one basis or as a group. The Panel will then notify the respondent of the complaint and set a meeting to address the issue. However, the Panel may decide that the issue detailed in the complaint is one that cannot be addressed at the local level, at which point the chair will refer the matter to the Florida Bar.

Our circuit is currently working to revamp the procedures of our LPP. The new procedure will be contained within an administrative order, which will be posted on the Circuit Court website along with any supporting documentation.

- 2. Please describe what types of professionalism issues are seen most often in this Circuit?**

Historically, complaints in our Circuit have primarily dealt with scheduling/attendance issues, delays in communication, and unprofessional electronic communications.

3. What are believed to be the causes of professionalism issues within your Circuit?

The most common causes of professionalism issues in our Circuit have been:

- 1) being overworked as a result of taking on more cases than an attorney can manage and/or poor time management,
- 2) personal stressors, and
- 3) adjusting to the changes in the practice of law post-Covid.

4. How often does your Circuit's Local Professionalism Panel meet?

At present, we typically meet as part of the Circuit's quarterly Bench/Bar meetings and as needed to discuss referrals. We also have at least one stand alone meeting per year.

5. Please describe any training provided to committee members.

To date, no training has been provided. We will be implementing the mandatory training required by the Supreme Court as soon as it is available. Going forward, we will also be considering supplemental trainings.

6. How is your Circuit's Local Professionalism Panel promoted?

A list of the members of the Panel can be found in an administrative order on the Circuit's website. The Chief Judge and the Panel will be providing a presentation to the local bar association in 2024. Once the local bar association completes their new website, information about the LPP will be included there for use by both attorneys and the public.

7. Please provide information regarding all complaint intake for the appropriate dates. If filing in June, the information should be from January 1st – June 15th. If filing in December, the information should be from June 16th – December 15th.

1.

Date of Referral: 9/22/23 (Suppl. 11/15/23)	Circuit in which issue arose: 14
Short Summary detailing the substance of the referral	
The referral concerned the competency of a local attorney and stemmed from observations of perceived diminishing capacity over the course of a year or more.	
The relationship of the respondent voluntarily participated in the process	
The complainant was a fellow attorney who had served as opposing counsel on cases with the respondent.	
Whether or not the respondent voluntarily participated in the process.	
This referral was determined to be one that could not be addressed on a local level, so the respondent was not asked to participate in the local process.	
The resolution, if any, of the referral;*	
The Panel referred the matter to the Florida Bar for investigation.	
Whether there were previous referrals against the respondent	
There had been one prior referral against the respondent.	

2.

Date of Referral:	Circuit in which issue arose:
Short Summary detailing the substance of the referral	
The relationship of the respondent voluntarily participated in the process	
Whether or not the respondent voluntarily participated in the process.	
The resolution, if any, of the referral;*	
Whether there were previous referrals against the respondent	

3.

Date of Referral:	Circuit in which issue arose:
Short Summary detailing the substance of the referral	
The relationship of the respondent voluntarily participated in the process	
Whether or not the respondent voluntarily participated in the process.	
The resolution, if any, of the referral;*	
Whether there were previous referrals against the respondent	

4.

Date of Referral:	Circuit in which issue arose:
Short Summary detailing the substance of the referral	
The relationship of the respondent voluntarily participated in the process	
Whether or not the respondent voluntarily participated in the process.	
The resolution, if any, of the referral;*	
Whether there were previous referrals against the respondent	

5.

Date of Referral:	Circuit in which issue arose:
Short Summary detailing the substance of the referral	
The relationship of the respondent voluntarily participated in the process	
Whether or not the respondent voluntarily participated in the process.	
The resolution, if any, of the referral;*	
Whether there were previous referrals against the respondent	

6.

Date of Referral:	Circuit in which issue arose:
Short Summary detailing the substance of the referral	
The relationship of the respondent voluntarily participated in the process	
Whether or not the respondent voluntarily participated in the process.	
The resolution, if any, of the referral;*	
Whether there were previous referrals against the respondent	

7.

Date of Referral:	Circuit in which issue arose:
Short Summary detailing the substance of the referral	
The relationship of the respondent voluntarily participated in the process	
Whether or not the respondent voluntarily participated in the process.	
The resolution, if any, of the referral;*	
Whether there were previous referrals against the respondent	

8.

Date of Referral:	Circuit in which issue arose:
Short Summary detailing the substance of the referral	
The relationship of the respondent voluntarily participated in the process	
Whether or not the respondent voluntarily participated in the process.	
The resolution, if any, of the referral;*	
Whether there were previous referrals against the respondent	

9.

Date of Referral:	Circuit in which issue arose:
Short Summary detailing the substance of the referral	
The relationship of the respondent voluntarily participated in the process	
Whether or not the respondent voluntarily participated in the process.	
The resolution, if any, of the referral;*	
Whether there were previous referrals against the respondent	

10.

Date of Referral:	Circuit in which issue arose:
Short Summary detailing the substance of the referral	
The relationship of the respondent voluntarily participated in the process	
Whether or not the respondent voluntarily participated in the process.	
The resolution, if any, of the referral;*	
Whether there were previous referrals against the respondent	

8. **Please provide the contact information for all current panel members.** Please include: name(s), email(s), address(es), and phone number(s), and title if applicable.

Name	Title/Firm	Email	Address	Phone Number
Chris Butler	Chair	butlerlawpa@gmail.com	456 E. 11th Street Panama City, FL 32401	850-747-5180
Douglas Smith	Vice Chair	dsmith@burkeblue.com	P.O. Box 70 Panama City, FL 32402	850-769-1414
Judge Russell Roberts	Member	baggettm@jud14.flcourts.org	201 N. Oklahoma Street Bonifay, FL 32425	850-547-1106
Nichole Pieper	Member	nichole.pieper@pd14.fl.gov	P.O. Box 580 Panama City, FL 32402	850-784-6155
Todd Brister	Member	tbrister@knology.net	P.O. Box 1759 Panama City, FL 32402	850-215-7885
Matthew Fuqua	Member	mfuqua@fmc.legal	P.O. Box 1508 Marianna, FL 32446	850-526-2263

The Florida Bar will publish on its website the LPP biannual reports. The Chief Judge, or the Chief Judge’s designee, will publish on the judicial Circuit’s website the LPP biannual reports from that Circuit.