




ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS  
INTER-OFFICE

MEMO 2008-36

TO: Honorable Edwin M. Fry, Jr

FROM: Thomas A. Genung, Trial Court Administrator 

DATE: November 26, 2008

RE: Administrative Order 2008-12  
University of South Florida Access to Dependency Court Records

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Attached please find an original **Administrative Order 2008-12** for filing with the Court.

If you have any questions regarding the above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

TAG/mt  
Attachment

cc: All Judges in the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit  
All Magistrates and Hearing Officers in the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit  
Myra Zilahy, Staff Attorney in the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit  
Honorable Bruce Colton, State Attorney's Office  
Honorable Diamond Litty, Public Defender's Office  
All County Attorneys in the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit  
All Local Law Libraries  
✓ All Local Bar Presidents  
Indian River County Clerk of Court  
Martin County Clerk of Court  
Okeechobee County Clerk of Court

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IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE NINETEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
IN AND FOR ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2008-12**

**RE: University of South Florida Access to Dependency Court Records**

The University of South Florida through the Harrell Center for the Study of Family Violence has been retained by the Office of the State Courts Administrator to conduct an assessment of the use of mediation in the dependency process. The Nineteenth Judicial Circuit has been selected as a control site because our circuit does not currently utilize dependency mediation. The chief justice of the Florida Supreme Court has requested the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit's participation in this study.

Analysis of dependency mediation in Florida courts will focus primarily on costs and benefits including outcome assessment. Data will be collected via surveys, in-person interviews and records review. Section 39.0132(3), Florida Statutes, authorizes the court to conditionally permit authorized representatives of recognized organizations compiling statistics for proper purposes to inspect and make abstracts from confidential dependency court records. By the power invested in the chief judges under Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.215(b)(2), it is therefore

**ORDERED:**

- 1. Permission of the University of South Florida through Representatives of the Harrell Center for the Study of Family Violence to Inspect and Make Abstracts from Juvenile Dependency Court Files**

Authorized representatives of the University of South Florida's Harrell Center for the Study of Family Violence will be permitted access to juvenile dependency court files, including termination of parental rights cases, under the conditions of this order. The authorized representatives of the University of South Florida Harrell Center are: Martha Coulter, Carla VandeWeerd, Etienne Pracht, Lianne Estefan, Euna August, Sarah Smith, Nicole Bafford, Hollie Fuhmann, Aimee Eden, Jennifer Carvalho-Salemi, Rebecca Taylor, Katherine Best and Asa Oxner. Substitution of any representative is permissible with prior written notice to the chief judge and the clerk of the circuit court.

**2. Conditional Access**

The following conditions apply to the collection and use of the data. The data collected must be used exclusively for analysis of dependency mediation in Florida. The authorized representatives of the Harrell Center must maintain the confidentiality standards imposed by Chapter 39 of the Florida Statutes during and after completion of their research. Except for case numbers and birth dates, the authorized representatives are prohibited from collecting any other personal information that could lead to the identification of a party or participant such as names, initials or ethnicity.

**3. Term of Access**

The authorized representatives will have access to the juvenile dependency court files from the date of entry of this administrative order through June 30, 2009.

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2008-12

DONE and ORDERED in Stuart, Martin County, Florida, this 21 day of November, 2008.

  
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WILLIAM L. ROBY  
CHIEF JUDGE