




LOCAL PROFESSIONALISM PANEL REPORT FORM

Chief Judge of Circuit:	The Honorable Shawn Crane 
Name of Submitter:	Andrew B. Sasso
Date:	June 15, 2025

***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.

RE: PROFESSIONALISM COMMITTEE AND LOCAL PROFESSIONALISM PANEL -
ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 2024-010 PA/PI-CIR - February 28, 2024

<https://www.jud6.org/LegalCommunity/LegalPractice/AOSAndRules/aos/aos2024/2024-010.pdf>

Local Professionalism Panel Complaint Referral

<https://www.floridabar.org/prof/local/lpp-referral-form/>

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

Professionalism Expectations:

5. Decorum and Courtesy

5.1 A lawyer should abstain from rude, disruptive, and disrespectful behavior.

7. Independence of Judgment

7.2 A lawyer should counsel a client or prospective client, even with respect to a meritorious claim or defense, about the public and private burdens of pursuing the claim as compared with the benefits to be achieved.

The Florida Bar Creed of Professionalism:

I will strictly adhere to the spirit as well as the letter of my profession's code of ethics, to the extent that the law permits and will at all times be guided by a fundamental sense of honor, integrity, and fair play.

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

Although the causes of professionalism issues are numerous, some of the most common factors include poor communication (such as relying solely on emails instead of in-person conversations or meetings), a lack of mentoring, diminished relationships between lawyers, high rates of mental health challenges (like depression and anxiety), substance abuse (harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and drugs), intense pressure to meet deadlines, prioritizing financial gain over client interests, an adversarial culture that values success at any cost, ethical conflicts arising from client demands for aggressive or even unethical tactics, and insufficient focus on mental health and well-being.

Also, contributing is the lack of knowledge about the existence of the Code for Resolving Professionalism Referrals (e.g., "Unprofessional Conduct" means a violation of the Standards of Professionalism found in the Oath of Admission to The Florida Bar, The Florida Bar Creed of Professionalism, the Professionalism Expectations, and the Rules Regulating The Florida Bar), lack of knowledge about the existence the Circuit's Local Professionalism Panel, and great hesitation to use the Circuit's Local Professionalism Panel due to fear of reprisal.

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

Circuit's Local Professionalism Panel created by RE: PROFESSIONALISM COMMITTEE AND LOCAL PROFESSIONALISM PANEL - ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 2024-010 PA/PI-CIR - February 28, 2024 – it states: "**Meetings and Conferences:** The LPP will meet from time to time to discuss the types of situations that have arisen and their resolutions, and to discuss possible modifications in procedure or structure of the process." For example, on November 6, 2024 there was a virtual meeting of the Circuit's Local Professionalism Panel – AGENDA and minutes were attached to the last LOCAL PROFESSIONALISM PANEL REPORT FORM.

5. Please describe any training provided to committee members.

To date, there have been two virtual meeting of the Circuit's Local Professionalism Panel on April 1, 2024 and November 6, 2024 - April 1, 2024 meeting included training with Shanell M. Schuyler (Director, ACAP/Intake - The Florida Bar). Members of the Circuit's Local Professionalism Panel also provided with Local Professionalism Panel Training (Course: #8354) (<https://www.floridabar.org/prof/local/>).

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

As stated in the last LOCAL PROFESSIONALISM PANEL REPORT FORM, Chief Judge (The Honorable Shawn Crane) speaks about the Circuit's Local Professionalism Panel at local bar luncheons (e.g., Clearwater Bar Association), articles published in local bar publications (e.g., St. Petersburg Bar Association's Paraclete - Professionalism Panels Take Center Stage), and post on the Circuit's Facebook page about the Local Professionalism Panel.

The St. Petersburg Bar Foundation's 11th Annual Professionalism Seminar highlighted the work of the Local Professionalism Panel.

Local Professionalism Panel Referral Form

Date of Referral: 11/1/2024	Circuit in which issue arose: 6th
Short Summary detailing the substance of the referral	
Attorney submitted referral of unprofessional conduct consisting of verbally abusive language to opposing counsel's staff and opposing counsel.	
The relationship of the respondent to the person submitting the referral.	
Person submitting the referral was opposing counsel - no other relationship.	
Whether or not the respondent voluntarily participated in the process.	
Yes. While not identifying in any way the referral source, the respondent seemed quite sure as to both what the referral was about and who made the referral. Due to a reasonably good conversation it is quite possible respondent will handle future communications in a satisfactory manner.	
The resolution, if any, of the referral;*	
Unknown at this time.	
Whether there were previous referrals against the respondent	
No no known previous referrals to the Local Professionalism Panel. However, respondent has a history with The Florida Bar.	

Local Professionalism Panel Referral Form

Date of Referral: 11/18/24	Circuit in which issue arose: 6th
Short Summary detailing the substance of the referral	
For a second time, a judge referred the matter concerning respondent who is a solo practitioner who has missed hearings and has not closed out cases.	
The relationship of the respondent to the person submitting the referral.	
The referring party was not a client of respondent or opposing attorney. The referring party is a judge assigned to cases in which respondent represents parties.	
Whether or not the respondent voluntarily participated in the process.	
The respondent was very polite and voluntarily participated in the process.	
The resolution, if any, of the referral;*	
Respondent explained that she has taken steps to improve her practice: hired an answering service, is in the process of hiring a part time legal assistant, purchased the management software known as Clio to assist her with automatic calendaring for hearings and appointments, and declining new cases. Respondent reports she is currently closing a formal estate administration and on her way to wrap up a guardianship.	
Whether there were previous referrals against the respondent	
Yes.	

Local Professionalism Panel Referral Form

Date of Referral: 11/26/2024	Circuit in which issue arose: 6th
Short Summary detailing the substance of the referral	
This referral was from a current sitting Judge with whom I had conversation prior to contacting the two lawyers involved. The referral was related directly to a lack of communication resulting in a lack of compliance with a court order for which the lawyers blamed one another.	
The relationship of the respondent to the person submitting the referral.	
None other than being in cases.	
Whether or not the respondent voluntarily participated in the process.	
Yes, both did. Clearly bad blood between the lawyers. Likely worse with one than the other. Options to address were discussed with both attorneys.	
The resolution, if any, of the referral;*	
None as of this date. While cooperating within this process, don't believe the lawyers involved are likely to take steps necessary to lower the temperature of the case in which they are participating. It's become very personal and I've suggested to both that making things personal very seldom, if ever, benefits a client.	
Whether there were previous referrals against the respondent	
As to both respondents, no knowledge of any previous referrals.	

Local Professionalism Panel Referral Form

Date of Referral: 11/26/24	Circuit in which issue arose: 6th
Short Summary detailing the substance of the referral	
<p>This referral was made by an attorney and involved a multitude of alleged failures to reasonably cooperate within the discovery process. The referral involved two Tampa lawyers with whom I spoke. They had multiple allegations of other than professional behavior from the other side of a pending case. Of course, I neither affirmed or denied their assumption of who made the referral.</p>	
The relationship of the respondent to the person submitting the referral.	
<p>None other than having a pending case.</p>	
Whether or not the respondent voluntarily participated in the process.	
<p>Yes.</p>	
The resolution, if any, of the referral;*	
<p>The respondents were both cooperative. Spoke with them individually. Made a few suggestions. Since the stories were rather remarkably different, was not able to render much in the way of helpful advice other than to take advantage of the case management process.</p>	
Whether there were previous referrals against the respondent	
<p>None to my knowledge.</p>	

Local Professionalism Panel Referral Form

Date of Referral: 12/6/24	Circuit in which issue arose: 6th
Short Summary detailing the substance of the referral	
Referral was related to opposing counsel in a pending divorce case allegedly driving to opposing counsel client's home. Police were called by client. Respondent alleged that he did not go to home but was near and did have contact with police. Police did not pursue anything. The two lawyers have significantly different spins concerning the situation.	
The relationship of the respondent to the person submitting the referral.	
Opposing counsel in a divorce case.	
Whether or not the respondent voluntarily participated in the process.	
After significant delay, yes. In fairness, the referral source was less than prompt in her own response.	
The resolution, if any, of the referral;*	
Problems appear to have gone away with time.	
Whether there were previous referrals against the respondent	
No knowledge as to referrals to the Local Professionalism Panel. Do have knowledge as to past alleged unrelated matters with The Florida Bar.	

Local Professionalism Panel Referral Form

Date of Referral: 03-10-2025	Circuit in which issue arose: 6th
Short Summary detailing the substance of the referral	
Judiciary complained that lawyer was rude and disrespectful.	
The relationship of the respondent to the person submitting the referral.	
A lawyer appearing before this Judge.	
Whether or not the respondent voluntarily participated in the process.	
Yes.	
The resolution, if any, of the referral;*	
Lawyer and Judge do not get along - no known resolution.	
Whether there were previous referrals against the respondent	
No, not to my knowledge.	

Local Professionalism Panel Referral Form

Date of Referral: 3.20.25	Circuit in which issue arose: 6th
Short Summary detailing the substance of the referral	
Judge referring matter to the LPP after a two week trial with the concerned party. There was a concern of legal competence; there was a lack of preparation for the trial; major pieces of evidence were missing; inappropriate demeanor at times in front of the jury; intermittent inability to stay on track; inability to hear; etc.	
The relationship of the respondent to the person submitting the referral.	
Judge presiding over trial, and Plaintiff's attorney.	
Whether or not the respondent voluntarily participated in the process.	
Yes, he spoke over the phone with the contact attorney for approximately 38 minutes.	
The resolution, if any, of the referral;*	
Discussed the current state of the concerned party's firm and caseload with the referring party.	
Whether there were previous referrals against the respondent	
Unknown.	

Local Professionalism Panel Referral Form

Date of Referral: April 23, 2025	Circuit in which issue arose: Sixth
Short Summary detailing the substance of the referral	
Respondent was accused of interrupting opposing counsel despite judicial warnings, not including his Florida Bar Number in pleadings, and of engaging in "sharp practice" which resulted in delay and a waste of docket time.	
The relationship of the respondent to the person submitting the referral.	
Respondent represents one of the parties in a contested family law matter. The person submitting the referral was the trial judge.	
Whether or not the respondent voluntarily participated in the process.	
The Respondent voluntarily participated in the process.	
The resolution, if any, of the referral;*	
Respondent characterized the 'sharp practice' allegation as a misunderstanding and was unwilling to take responsibility. Respondent acknowledged interrupting opposing counsel and stated he would refrain and get a court reporter for future hearings. He agreed to reach out to opposing counsel to make sure they were on the same page. Respondent acknowledged that he could - and would - act with more professionalism.	
Whether there were previous referrals against the respondent	
There were no known previous referrals against 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
	SEE ATTACHED			

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.

Attachment A

Sixth Judicial Circuit Local Professionalism Panel Membership Roster

Chair of the LPP: Andrew Sasso

Pasco County

<u>Name</u>	<u>Contact Information</u>	<u>Practice Area</u>	<u>Term Expiration</u>
<i>Contact Attorney East Side</i> Ryan Doddridge	Office: 727-846-8500	Probate/Civil	June 30, 2027
<i>Contact Attorney West Side</i> Francis Werner-Watkins	Office: 727-863-1553	Criminal	June 30, 2027
Amanda Colon	Office: 813-254-8998	Family	June 30, 2026*
L. Javan Grant	Office: 813-995-6444	Personal Injury	June 30, 2025*

Pinellas County

<u>Name</u>	<u>Contact Information</u>	<u>Practice Area</u>	<u>Term Expiration</u>
<i>Contact Attorney</i> Andrew Sasso	Office: 727-441-8966	Probate	June 30, 2027
<i>Contact Attorney</i> Bridget Heptner	Office: 727-726-9799	Family	June 30, 2027
<i>Contact Attorney</i> Denis DeVlaming	Office: 727-461-0525	Criminal	June 30, 2026*
<i>Contact Attorney</i> Joshua Chilson	Office: 727-461-1818	Personal Injury	June 30, 2026*
Raleigh "Lee" Greene	Office: 727-821-2900	Family	June 30, 2026*
Shirin Vesely	Office: 727-896-7171	Civil	June 30, 2025*
Zack Zuroweste	Office: 727-796-7666	Probate/Civil	June 30, 2025*
Weston "Wes" Smith	Office: 727-408-6100	Personal Injury	June 30, 2025*

To stagger the terms of LPP members, members designated with an * will initially serve a shorter term. Thereafter, members of the LPP serve staggered three-year terms, beginning on July 1 and ending on June 30 of the third year. LPP members may be reappointed to serve one additional three-year term. Under no circumstances may a member serve for more than six consecutive years.

Updated contact information can be found on The Florida Bar's Lawyer Directory.

Last Updated 2/27/24