

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NUMBER: A-2020-02**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER GOVERNING BATTERERS' INTERVENTION  
PROGRAM PROVIDERS & RESCINDING ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER A-2017-54,**

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Article V, section 2(d) of the Florida Constitution and section 43.26, Florida Statutes, the Chief Judge of each judicial circuit, or their designee, is charged with the authority and the power to do everything necessary to promote the prompt and efficient administration of justice; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to the constitutional, statutory and designated authority and responsibility for administrative supervision of the family courts within the circuit; and

**WHEREAS**, in 741.32, Florida Statutes, the Legislature has found that the incidence of domestic violence in this state is disturbingly high. Additionally, the Legislature has found that there should be standardized programming available to the justice system to protect victims and their children and to hold the perpetrators of domestic violence accountable for their acts. Finally, the Legislature recognizes that in order for batterers' intervention programs to be successful in protecting victims and their children, all participants in the justice system as well as social service agencies and local and state governments must coordinate their efforts at the community level; and

**WHEREAS**, the Department of Children and Families has historically been responsible for the statewide domestic violence program, which provides supervision, direction, coordination, and administration of activities related to domestic violence prevention and intervention services; and

**WHEREAS**, imperative to ending domestic violence is to ensure that batterers' intervention program providers have the necessary credentials, experience and hands-on

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knowledge to ensure program effectiveness and offender compliance with a focus on victim safety; and

**WHEREAS**, batterers' intervention programs are an integral component to a comprehensive approach to domestic violence. Strong communication between providers of such programs and the justice system is paramount to ensure perpetrators of domestic violence are held accountable and a change in behavior is attainable; and

**WHEREAS**, effective July 1, 2012, HB 7093 amended section 741.32, Florida Statutes, and other related statutes. As a result, the Department of Children and Family Services Office was no longer responsible for certification and/or monitoring of batterers' intervention programs; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to section 741.325(1), Florida Statutes, when the court orders the respondent to participate in a batterers' intervention program, the court, or any entity designated by the court, must provide the respondent with a list of batterers' intervention programs from which the respondent must choose a program in which to participate; and

**WHEREAS**, the undersigned has determined that establishing an approved list of certified batterers' intervention program providers for the Fifth Judicial Circuit would serve the interests of justice and judicial economy, preserve judicial resources, and assist the Judiciary when determining if the offender received the benefit of a proper court-ordered program; and

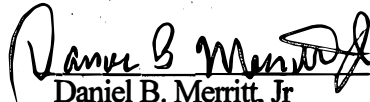
**WHEREAS**, it has become necessary for the Fifth Judicial Circuit to establish an administrative process for review, approval, certification, renewal and regulation of program providers meeting the necessary requirements to be certified as a batterers' intervention program provider as provided by the Florida Statutes and this Administrative Order;

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**NOW, THEREFORE, I Daniel B. Merritt, Jr.** pursuant to the authority vested in me as Chief Judge of the Fifth Judicial Circuit, do hereby **ORDER** as follows:

1. An approved "registry" of Batterers' Intervention Programs be established and maintained through an application and affidavit process.
2. The Family Court Case Manager shall maintain and publish an approved list of Certified Batterers' Intervention Providers.
3. The registry may be amended at any time and the most current list shall be distributed to all Judges, Clerks of Court, Office of the State Courts Administrator and Departments of County Probation for use when ordering or requiring an individual to attend a batterers' intervention program.
4. This process shall begin immediately and shall so continue until further order.
5. The program shall be administered as set forth in the attachment to this Administrative Order attached hereto and incorporated herein.
6. Administrative Order A-2017-54 is rescinded

**DONE AND ORDERED** at Brooksville, Hernando County, Florida, this 6th  
day of January, 2020.

  
Daniel B. Merritt, Jr  
Chief Judge  
Fifth Judicial Circuit

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**FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT BATTERERS INTERVENTION PROGRAM  
ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Updated  
December 2019

**I. CERTIFICATION OF BATTERERS' INTERVENTION PROGRAM PROVIDERS:**

Any batterers' intervention program (hereinafter "Program Provider") seeking certification as an approved batterers' intervention program within the Fifth Judicial Circuit must meet the requirements of section 741.325, Florida Statutes, and this Administrative Order. Pursuant to section 741.325(1), Florida Statutes, a batterers' intervention program must meet the following requirements:

- (a) The primary purpose of the program shall be victim safety and the safety of children, if present.
- (b) The batterer shall be held accountable for acts of domestic violence.
- (c) The program shall be at least 29 weeks in length and include 24 weekly sessions, plus appropriate intake, assessment, and orientation programming.
- (d) The program content shall be based on a psychoeducational model that addresses tactics of power and control by one person over another.
- (e) The program shall be funded by user fees paid by the batterers who attend the program, which allows them to take responsibility for their acts of violence. An exception shall be made for local, state, or federal programs that fund batterers' intervention programs in whole or in part.

**II. APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATION OF BATTERERS' INTERVENTION PROGRAM PROVIDERS:**

**A. *New Program Provider Applicants:***

- 1. The Program Provider Applicant must submit an application to the address listed in Paragraph (D)(4) of this section. This application can be obtained on our website at [www.circuit5.org](http://www.circuit5.org). The Program Provider Applicant must also submit an Affidavit of Compliance certifying that the program meets all the

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qualifications to be a Program Provider as listed in section 741.325, Florida Statutes.

2. A Program Provider Applicant who meets the requirements of the Florida Statutes and this Administrative Order may be placed on the registry and, once placed on the registry, shall be authorized to offer a Batters' Intervention Program in the Fifth Judicial Circuit. Placement on the registry shall be valid for one (1) year.

**B. *Annual Renewal Applications***

1. The Program Provider must submit a renewal application yearly. Renewal applications may be obtained through the Fifth Judicial Circuit's website.
2. Renewal applications must be submitted to the manager of the Batters' Intervention Program Registry each year by the first day of January.
3. Failure to submit the renewal application will result in immediate removal from the Fifth Judicial Circuit's Batters' Intervention Program Registry.

**C. *Continuing Duties***

1. It is the responsibility of the Program Provider to immediately notify the Court if the Program Provider no longer meets statutory requirements, at which time the batterers intervention provider's name will be immediately removed from the court's list of providers.
2. Failure to notify the court when the batterers' intervention provider is no longer in compliance with the statute may constitute fraud.
3. Failure to update necessary information, file an annual renewal application, or failure to continuously meet the requirements of the Florida Statutes, terms set forth in the application and/or this Administrative Order will result in immediate removal from the list.

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4. The program provider must continually satisfy all criteria to be included on the list of batterer intervention programs providers.

**D. *Program location and Meeting Requirements***

1. The Program provider must have a physical place of business in at least one of the five counties of the Fifth Judicial Circuit (Citrus, Hernando, Lake, Marion and/or Sumter Counties). Each session must be conducted and attended in person. Virtual and/or electronic attendance sessions are not permitted.
2. The program provider must accept participants regardless of what county in the Fifth Judicial Circuit the participant resides. Participants are not required to participate in a program in the county where case is pending.
3. The Court may audit the Provider's program as necessary to ensure compliance with Florida Statutes. Audits may include: a survey of participants of the Batters' Intervention Provider's Program, observation of actual program classes, and/or written or verbal requests for additional information. Failure to comply with these audit requirements and procedure will result in immediate removal from the fifth judicial circuit registry of approved providers.
4. All applications, renewals, and other notifications should be sent to the following address:

BIP Provider List  
Lake County Courthouse,  
550 West Main Street,  
Tavares, FL 32778

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**III. Miscellaneous:**

1. Inclusion on the Fifth Circuit registry of approved Program Providers may be rescinded by the Chief Judge or the Administrative Judge of the Family Law Courts and Divisions of the Fifth Judicial Circuit at will.
2. The Chief Judge may amend or expand the provisions or coverage of this Administrative Order at any time and without notice.
3. The Chief Judge may issue other or further administrative orders as he or she, in his or her discretion, may deem necessary.