



LOCAL PROFESSIONALISM PANEL REPORT FORM

Chief Judge of Circuit:	Daniel B. Merritt, Jr.
Name of Submitter:	Ann Melinda Craggs
Date:	June 12, 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 December 15 to
June 15, 2026.**

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.

The Fifth Judicial Circuit's website, www.circuit5.org, includes as one of its Programs & Services, "Professionalism Committee." A link to file a professionalism complaint is included, along with the Circuit's Administrative Order regarding the Local Professionalism Panel and information concerning the Florida Supreme Court's commitment to professionalism.

A link to the Complaint Referral Form is:
www.circuit5.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/complaint-referral-form-professionalism-revised-nov.pdf

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

Attorneys failing to appear at hearings, lack of candor to the Court, unprofessional conduct both written and oral toward judges.

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

The unpreparedness of attorneys at hearings. The willingness to excuse their own behavior as harmless error. For example, repeatedly missing hearings and blaming it on scheduling errors.

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

At a minimum the LPP meets as required by statute, rule, or Florida Supreme Administrative Order. Additionally the LPP meets each time a Complaint is made and, then, as a subgroup to meet the attorney against whom the Complaint has been made. Twice annual meetings are scheduled.

5. Please describe any training provided to committee members.

In December 2023 the Fifth Circuit LPP was trained as a group by the The Florida Bar, as required by SC2023-0884. Since that time, the LPP has created the required CLE and presented same on four (4) occasions in Lake, Hernando, Citrus, and Marion Counties. Different members of the LPP participated in presenting the CLE. It is anticipated that additional training will be provided in the third quarter of 2026.

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

Lawyers and Judges are encouraged and counseled to report unprofessional behavior on an ongoing basis. As a self-regulated profession we must report unprofessional behavior to the LPP in order that our profession can remain self-regulated and professional.

Each member of the LPP has promoted, in person or through group communication, the existence of, the function of, and have encouraged the use of the LPP to the members of not only the local bar associations but also other professional groups of which they are associated.

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

1.

Date of Referral: , April 1, 2026	Circuit in which issue arose: 5th
Short Summary detailing the substance of the referral	
It was alleged by the Presiding Judge that the Attorney failed in his or her duty to appear at hearings even those scheduled for remote appearance. It is alleged that the attorney failed to appear at a hearing on a motion to withdraw. Additionally, failed to timely respond to a show cause order related to the non-appearance causing the case to be dismissed.	
The relationship of the respondent to the person submitting the referral.	
Judge before whom the Attorney had motions.	
Whether or not the respondent voluntarily participated in the process.	
No, because the panel sent a formal letter reminding the attorney of his professional duties to a client and the court, with its finding that his behavior was unprofessional.	
The resolution, if any, of the referral;*	
See above. A sub-panel studied the documents and statements and, given the totality of the circumstances, decided a formal reminder letter was appropriate.	
Whether there were previous referrals against the respondent	
None known.	

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
Ann Melinda Craggs	Circuit Judge	amcraggs@circuit5.org	110 NW 1st Ave. Ocala, FL	352-401-6785
Stephen Toner	Circuit Judge	stoner@circuit5.org	20 N. Main St. Brooksville, FL	352-754-5802
Timothy McCourt	Circuit Judge	tmccourt@circuit5.org	110 NW 1st Ave. Ocala, FL	352-401-6789
John Spivey, Esq.	Washo & Spivey	spivey216@aol.com	535 W. Main St. Tavares, FL	352-253-2244
Melanie Marsh	Lake County	melanie.marsh@lakecountyfl.gov	PO Box 7800 Tavares, FL	352-343-9787
Paul Militello	County Judge	pmilitello@circuit5.org	215 McCollum Ave. Bushnell, FL	352-569-6930
Jessica Czaya, Esq.	Keith Taylor Law	jessica@keithtaylorlaw.com	PO Box 2016, Lecanto, FL	352-795-0404

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.