

**IN THE THIRD JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2018-004**

**IN RE:        MILITARY VETERANS AND  
                  SERVICEMEMBERS COURT**

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**WHEREAS**, in 2012, the Florida Legislature enacted § 394.47891, Florida Statutes, which permitted the chief judge of each judicial circuit to establish a “Military Veterans and Servicemembers Court Program,” which creates a specialty court for veterans and servicemembers who suffer from substance abuse and mental health needs within the criminal justice system;

**WHEREAS**, these courts have become known as Veteran Treatment Courts, and currently there exists about 30 Veteran Treatment Courts within the state of Florida;

**WHEREAS**, these treatment courts were based on drug court and mental health court, which are also known as problem-solving courts;

**WHEREAS**, the Third Judicial Circuit does not currently have a Veteran Treatment Court but certainly has veterans who could benefit from participation in a Veteran Treatment Court; and

**WHEREAS**, cases in Florida that have been referred to problem-solving courts, like mental health, drug treatment, and veteran treatment, are routinely transferred to a different circuit or county, pursuant to § 910.035(5), Fla. Stat., referred to as the transfer statute.

It is therefore **ORDERED**:

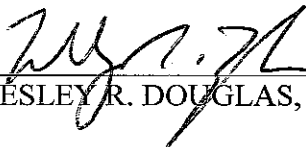
Cases in which the defendant meets the necessary criteria to qualify for placement in a Veteran Treatment Court but cannot participate in such a court because the Third Judicial Circuit does not have one may motion to transfer his or her case to a circuit and county in which such a court exists.

The authorized representative for the Third Judicial Circuit is the judge assigned to preside over the criminal matter, as he or she is best suited to determine the eligibility for and appropriateness of the requested transfer.

The defendant and case must meet all statutory requirements to be eligible for transfer, which includes proving that the transferee court, by way of its authorized representative, agrees

to accept the case.

**DONE** in Columbia County, Florida, on April 20, 2018.

  
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WESLEY R. DOUGLAS, CHIEF JUDGE

ORIGINAL: *Clerk of Court, Columbia County*

COPIES TO: *Circuit and County Judges, Third Judicial Circuit*  
*Clerks of Court, Third Judicial Circuit*  
*Office of Public Defender, Third Judicial Circuit*  
*Office of State Attorney, Third Judicial Circuit*