

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE NINETEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
IN AND FOR INDIAN RIVER, MARTIN, OKEECHOBEE, AND ST. LUCIE COUNTIES  
STATE OF FLORIDA

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2023-02**  
(Superseding Administrative Order 2014-06)

**RE: Revised Criminal Background Investigation for Prospective and Current Employees, Contractors, Volunteers, and Affiliates working in any Courthouse in the 19<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit of Florida**

**WHEREAS**, it is a common interest of the judges and administration of the 19<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit, Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee and St. Lucie County Commissioners, Clerks and Sheriffs that all persons attending court or working in the 19<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Court facilities are reasonably safe and secure while in those facilities; and

**WHEREAS**, in recent years there has been an escalation of violence in and around courthouses and against judges, court, county and clerk staff, and law enforcement officials throughout the United States and in Florida; and

**WHEREAS**, matters coming before the court are wrought with emotion and life changing issues and outcomes; and

**WHEREAS**, to maintain a secure environment in the Courthouses in the 19<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit of Florida, it is important that all prospective and current employees, contractors, volunteers, and affiliates conducting work in the courthouses undergo a criminal background investigation to verify that the prospective or current employee/contractor/volunteer/affiliate does not have any pending first degree misdemeanor or felony cases, or prior first degree misdemeanor or felony withholds or convictions; and

**WHEREAS**, the Sheriff of each county in the 19<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit is funded by the respective county commission to provide for courthouse security and attend all terms of the circuit and county courts in the respective county; and

**NOW THEREFORE**, pursuant to the authority of the chief judge under section 43.26, Florida Statutes, and Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.215, effective immediately, it is hereby

**ORDERED** as follows:

1. That all prospective and current employees, contractors, volunteers, and affiliates working in the Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee or St. Lucie County Courthouse shall submit to a level 2 criminal background investigation, inclusive of a search of the sexual predator and sexual offender registries of any state in which the current or prospective employee resided during the immediate preceding 5 years, prior to working in the facility, and shall be free of any convictions or withholds of adjudication for first degree misdemeanors or felonies and

shall not have any pending first degree misdemeanor or felony case if accessing secure areas of the courthouse governed by the Chief Judge. Prior first degree misdemeanor or felony convictions or withholds of adjudication, or pending first degree misdemeanor or felony charges, may preclude a prospective or current employee, contractor, volunteer, or affiliate from access to the secure areas of the Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee and St. Lucie County Courthouses that are governed by the Chief Judge.

2. If a criminal background investigation shows a prior first degree misdemeanor or felony conviction or withhold of adjudication for a prospective or current employee, contractor, volunteer, or affiliate the information detailing the conviction(s) or withhold(s) must be provided to that individual's manager, who shall immediately provide the information to the Chief Judge. The Chief Judge in consultation with the affected employer will determine if the prospective or current employee, contractor, volunteer, or affiliate will be allowed access to the secure areas of Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee or St. Lucie County Courthouse governed by the Chief Judge.

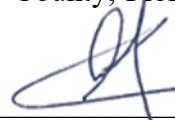
3. In the event that a current employee, contractor, volunteer, or affiliate is arrested for a misdemeanor or felony, that individual must immediately inform management in writing of the pending charges and nature of the charges. Upon receipt of the arrest information, the manager must provide that information to the Chief Judge. The Chief Judge in consultation with the affected employer will determine if the employee, contractor, volunteer, or affiliate will be allowed access to the secure areas of the Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee or St. Lucie County Courthouse governed by the Chief Judge.

4. Sheriff Deputies working court security details in each courthouse in the 19<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit may take any and all reasonable steps necessary to ensure the safety of all individuals in the respective courthouses.

5. Upon written request, and on a case-by-case basis, the Chief Judge may allow a prospective employee, employee, contractor, volunteer, or affiliate with a prior conviction or withhold of adjudication for a first degree misdemeanor or felony, or pending misdemeanor or felony charge to conduct work in the secure areas of the courthouse governed by the Chief Judge.

6. This Administrative Order replaces Administrative Order 2014-06 and shall remain in full force and effect until further order of the Chief Judge.

**DONE AND ORDERED** at Ft. Pierce, St. Lucie County, Florida, the 17th day of July, 2023.



CHARLES SCHWAB, CHIEF JUDGE

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