



## Michigan Supreme Court

State Court Administrative Office  
Michigan Hall of Justice  
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Milton L. Mack, Jr.  
State Court Administrator

### MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 1, 2017

TO: Circuit Court Judges  
Friends of the Court

cc: Presiding Family Division Judges  
Circuit Court Administrators  
Family Division Administrators

FROM: Milton L. Mack, Jr.

RE: Parenting Coordinators

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The “parenting coordinator” statute, MCL 722.27c, became effective on January 14, 2015. A parenting coordinator is a person appointed by the court for a specified term to help implement the parenting time orders of the court and to help resolve parenting disputes that fall within the scope of that appointment.

MCL 722.27c(14) states: “As directed by the supreme court, the state court administrative office shall develop standards for the qualifications and training of parenting coordinators, including training regarding violent and coercive domestic relationships. Parenting coordinators must complete the training within 2 years of the promulgation of the standards described in this subsection.”

The State Court Administrative Office (SCAO) convened a workgroup of interested stakeholders to identify issues and to develop parenting coordinator training and qualification recommendations. The workgroup concluded that parenting coordination is a relatively new practice and that procedures vary between states and within Michigan (not only by county, but also by practitioner). Because of this, the workgroup recommended adopting modified standards issued by the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC) in its guidelines but limited to only training and qualifications.

This memorandum adopts the recommendations of the workgroup. The AFCC Guideline I is adopted as qualifications for parenting coordinators in the modified form below:

### Guideline I (as modified)

A parenting coordinator (PC) shall be qualified by education and training to undertake parenting coordination and shall continue to develop professionally in the role.

- A. The PC shall be required to have training and experience in family mediation. The PC shall have completed a training program approved by the State Court Administrative Office's Office of Dispute Resolution providing the generally accepted components of domestic relations mediation skills.
- B. The PC shall be a licensed mental health or legal professional in an area relating to families. The PC must:
  - (1) be a licensed attorney, a licensed or limited licensed psychologist, a licensed professional counselor, or a licensed marriage and family therapist;
  - (2) have a master's degree in counseling, social work, or marriage and family therapy;
  - (3) have a graduate degree in a behavioral science; or
  - (4) have 5 years' experience in family counseling.

~~or a certified family mediator under the rules or laws of the jurisdiction with a master's degree in a mental health field.~~
- C. The PC should have extensive practical experience in the mental health or legal ~~the~~ profession with high conflict or litigating parents.
- D. The PC shall have training in the parenting coordination process, family dynamics in separation and divorce, parenting coordination techniques, domestic violence and child maltreatment, and court-specific parenting coordination procedures. A model training curriculum incorporating four modules is included in the Guidelines.
- E. A PC shall acquire and maintain professional competence in the parenting coordination process. A PC shall regularly participate in educational activities promoting professional growth. It is recommended that a PC participate in peer consultation or mentoring to receive feedback and support on cases. PC orders and/or private agreements should specify that such professional consultation is permitted.
- F. A PC shall decline an appointment, withdraw, or request appropriate assistance when the facts and circumstances of the case are beyond the PC's skill or expertise.
- G. ~~G.~~ ~~A jurisdiction should consider "grandfathering" existing professionals with appropriate experience.~~

December 1, 2017

Page 3

Appendix A of the AFCC Guideline setting forth training requirements is adopted.

In the future, parenting coordination may be more widely used and standards may naturally take hold within communities. If SCAO determines that further recommendations or standards for qualifications and training should be required, SCAO will reconvene the workgroup for further recommendations.

In the event local courts have questions regarding parenting coordinators, please contact Timothy Cole at 517-373-9663 or [colet@courts.mi.gov](mailto:colet@courts.mi.gov).