

The Disclosure Statement

A publication of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Northern District of Florida

Amendments to N.D. Fla. LBR Effective February 26, 2024

Chief Judge Karen K. Specie and Clerk of Court Traci E. Abrams wish to express their gratitude for the time and dedication of the members of the Local Rules Committee including attorneys Byron "Trey" Wright, III (Chair), Marybeth Colón (Secretary), India Footman, Karin Garvin, Roland Kiehn, Michael Niles, Logan Sliva, Sharon Sperling, Trevor Thompson, and Director of Court Operations, Tammi Boswell.

The Amended Local Rules became effective February 26, 2024, and are available on our website at www.flnb.uscourts.gov/local-rules in both .pdf and searchable "webpage" format. Committee Notes and a "redline" version have been provided for your convenience.

Administrative Orders Updates

FLNB Administrative Orders 22-001, Order Adopting Interim Local Rule 1009-1 (regarding amendments of voluntary petitions, lists, schedules, and statements) and 21-003, Order Adopting Interim Local Rule 5081-1 and Abrogating Local Rule 1006-1 (regarding filing fees and acceptable forms of payment) have been **vacated**. These directives have been adopted in the most recent amendments to the Local Rules for U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Florida (N.D. Fla. LBR).

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FLNB Quick-Click Resources

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- ◆ [Court National Guard and Reservists Debt Relief Act of 2008](#)
- ◆ [Judgment Book](#)
- ◆ [Mortgage Modification Mediation](#)
- ◆ [N.D. Fla. Bankruptcy Bar Association and Pro Bono Information](#)
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News & Views from the Bench

Honorable Karen K. Specie, Chief Bankruptcy Judge

— PRO BONO HONOR ROLL —

THE COURT IS GRATEFUL FOR ALL PRO BONO SERVICES BY ATTORNEYS:

These attorneys have handled, or are handling, cases or matters *pro bono* so far this year: **Robert Bruner, India Footman, Samantha Kelley, and Michael Wynn.**

These attorneys have volunteered for the RAP (Reaffirmation Assistance Program), sponsored by the NDFLBBA: **Samantha Kelley, Logan Sliva, and Trey Wright.** *Please join me in thanking these attorneys- they help each and every one of us!*

— FLNB PRO BONO INITIATIVE NEEDS YOU! —

VOLUNTEER - SIGN UP TO HELP. Many of the same attorneys are providing *pro bono* services every month. THAT'S NOT FAIR – EVERY ATTORNEY IN OUR DISTRICT SHOULD BE ABLE TO HELP. **Please volunteer for the Pro Bono Initiative, by calling 866-944-6421. For more information, visit: <https://www.flnb.uscourts.gov/ndflbba-pro-bono-initiative>.**

— AMENDED LOCAL RULES ARE LIVE! —

*****THANK YOU TO FLNB LOCAL RULES COMMITTEE MEMBERS - OUR HEROES!*****

The Amended Local Rules became effective on February 26, 2024. Amended Local Rules are posted in PDF and “web page” versions, along with a redline version showing all amendments: <https://www.flnb.uscourts.gov/local-rules>. Thank you to past Committee Chair Byron "Trey" Wright, III, Secretary Marybeth Colón, India Footman, Karin Garvin, Roland Kiehn, Michael Niles, Logan Sliva, Sharon Sperling, Trevor Thompson. We also thank Clerk of Court, Traci Abrams, and Director of Court Operations, Tammi Boswell.

— “BROWN BAG” LUNCHEAS ARE BACK! —

GAINESVILLE COURTHOUSE: WEDNESDAY, MAY 22, 2024, approx. 11:45 a.m. (ET) (after the morning hearing docket), Jury Assembly Room (former § 341 Meeting Room), 2nd floor. Bring your lunch (“BYOL”) and share fellowship with each other and Judge Specie. Water and sodas will be provided. BE THERE!

PENSACOLA COURTHOUSE: The “brown bag” lunch on March 12, 2024, was a huge success! About 20 or so practitioners, friends, and colleagues joined me and my staff to mingle and break bread together. It was wonderful to see each other again in person and catch up on families, careers, etc. Special thanks to the NDFLBBA and its President, Travis Morock, for their help.

TALLAHASSEE COURTHOUSE: DATE AND TIME TO BE DETERMINED. Everyone had such a great time at the Pensacola brown bag lunch, we will be scheduling more “brown bag” luncheons in the near future.

— FLORIDA BAR OPINION re GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE —

Florida lawyers have new guidelines for using generative artificial intelligence (“AI”). See Florida Bar Advisory Ethics Opinion 24-1: <https://www.floridabar.org/etopinions/opinion-24-1/>.

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— THE CASE WEIGHTING STUDY IS OVER FOR FLNB! —

My reporting period for the Federal Judicial Center's ("FJC") National Bankruptcy Case Weighting Study ended on March 17, 2024- HOORAY! Everything went smoothly. Special thanks to Leigh Duncan, Chapter 13 Trustee, and her staff, including Gena Farnell and Judy Miller, for their excellent help (as usual) coordinating hearings during this time.

— UPCOMING SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES —

- ◇ [2024 Eleventh Circuit Judicial Conference](#) May 8-11, 2024, Point Clear, AL
- ◇ [NDFLBBA 2024 Annual Cocktail Reception, Meeting, and Seminar](#) September 26-27, 2024, Destin, FL
- ◇ [Florida Bar Annual Convention](#) June 19-22, 2024, Orlando, FL
- ◇ The Michael G. Williamson View From the Bench November 7, 2024, Tampa, FL
November 8, 2024, Miami, FL
- ◇ Jacksonville Bankruptcy Bar Association 2024 Annual Seminar August 16, 2024, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL
- ◇ Florida Bar Business Law Section (BLS) Annual Labor Day Retreat August 30-September 2, 2024, Naples, FL

— VETERANS FINANCIAL LITERACY PROGRAM —

The Veterans Financial Literacy Program held on December 9, 2023, at the law offices of Clark Partington in Pensacola, FL was another HUGE SUCCESS, as you can see:



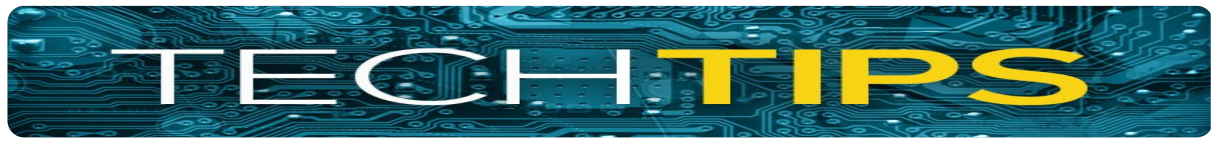
For more information on the Veterans Financial Literacy Program, see the December 2023 issue of *The Disclosure Statement*, "News and Views from the Bench" at www.flnb.uscourts.gov/newsletter.

Financial literacy courses shouldn't be about selecting stocks or advanced Excel modeling, but rather about developing ways to cope with all of the money concerns that will definitely crop up much sooner than expected.
~ Katherine Yao, [Hello Katie](#), The Cornell Daily Sun, October 3, 2021

QC Cues

Quality Control Reminders from the Case Administrators

- **Notice of Appearance or Request for Notice:** When electronically filing a Notice of Appearance or a Request for Notice, please be sure to add the address to where notices should be sent if notice is to be sent to an address other than or in addition to the address of record for the person electronically filing the Notice or Request. Failure to input this information will result in the recipient not being added to the official mailing matrix.
- **Box 4 - Your Employer Identification Number:** When completing bankruptcy paperwork, the debtor's employer's Employer Identification Number ("EIN") should ***not*** be provided in Box 4 of an individual debtor's Voluntary Petition unless the debtor is self-employed and the EIN belongs to the debtor (i.e., "**Your** Employer Identification Number, if any"). Courts across the nation are seeing an increase in debtors' employer's EINs being entered into this field which is causing many cases to be reported as "repeat filers" when they actually are not. A debtor incorrectly determined to be a repeat filer may encounter difficulties with the automatic stay and at the time of discharge.



An Unexpected View

When attending hearings by video, please be mindful of the view you share with your colleagues. Use the settings in your program to blur the background or participate from a location appropriate to the circumstances and with an environment that would not be distracting to the other participants (e.g., a quiet, well-lit room with a neutral background). To maximize your non-verbal communications, position the camera at head height and zoom in or out so that only your head, torso, and arms are in the camera view.

It is said that Florida has two seasons: wet and cold.

As we have now entered the "wet" season this year, please monitor our website at www.flnb.uscourts.gov for announcements regarding unplanned office closures or court schedule changes due to severe weather.

Learn more about our notifications at www.flnb.uscourts.gov/inclement-and-tropical-weather.

Ordering Transcripts & Digital Court Recordings

The [Ordering Transcripts & Recordings](#) page of our website has been updated to include instructions and links to Local Forms for ordering a transcript or a digital court recording ("DCR") and an alphabetized list of approved transcription service providers (*the list order does not indicate the Court's preference*). When submitting your order, you must provide all the information requested on the form and pay any applicable fee for us to timely process your request.

Coming Soon to FLNB

Negative Notice List: An updated Negative Notice List will soon be posted to our website. This revision cycle includes a new negative notice legend specifically for fee applications. We will post an announcement on our website and send an email notification to let you know when the new list is available. All negative notice legends currently in use are available on the Local Forms page of our website in the "[Local Forms \(any chapter\)](#)" section.

E-Orders: We anticipate launching the new (to FLNB) E-Orders program this June to replace the current method of submitting proposed orders. As part of this new process, the Proposed Orders Guidelines will be revised to reflect new formatting requirements and will be published in advance of the launch to allow you sufficient time to modify your document templates. We will provide a training video on how to use the new program ahead of the "go live" date.



We take great pleasure in recognizing the following people who have cause to celebrate a milestone their Judiciary careers:



Nick Thrasher **Software Administrator/Programmer - Pensacola**

MILE 5 In five short years, Nick has become an essential and invaluable member of our court's Systems team. He routinely volunteers to take on tasks that are not normally within his job description to help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our team. After Bruce Justham's retirement at the end of 2022, Nick officially become our lead CM/ECF technical expert, responsible for all programming changes for local and national modifications to the program and the NextGen "add ons" that we are working to implement.

Wade Feltman **IT Security Officer/Programmer Analyst - Telework**

MILE 20 Unflappable Wade continues to be our go-to guy for those "strange" system and application problems. His calm, methodical approach to problems and his ability to analyze the issues and quickly provide a solution makes him a highly valued resource for our court as well as the entire federal judiciary systems community. As our court's IT Security Officer, Wade evaluates our systems and processes to ensure that our court is in compliance with requirements of the Administrative Office and keeps us on our toes regarding the security and integrity of our electronic systems.

Tammi Boswell **Director of Court Operations - Tallahassee**

MILE 25 Tammi has been with our court since January 2015 and previously served with the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Western District of Louisiana. As the Director of Court Operations, she oversees the day-to-day operations of the Clerk's Office. Tammi also serves on most of the *ad hoc* committees convened to review and revise or implement new processes and procedures for our practitioners, including the most recent local rules revision. Tammi works diligently to ensure that our internal procedures and processes help our Clerk's staff achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness for the judges, the bar, and our public.

Judge each day not by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds you plant. ~ William A. Ward

Bankruptcy Filings on the Rise

The Administrative office of the U.S. Courts ("the AO") [reported](#) in January that total bankruptcy filings nationally rose 16.8% in 2023, with significant increases in both business and non-business bankruptcies. Locally in the Northern District of Florida, we saw an increase of 21% in bankruptcy case filings (business and non-business) - 10% of which were filed *pro se* - and a whopping 58% increase in chapter 11 filings in 2023.

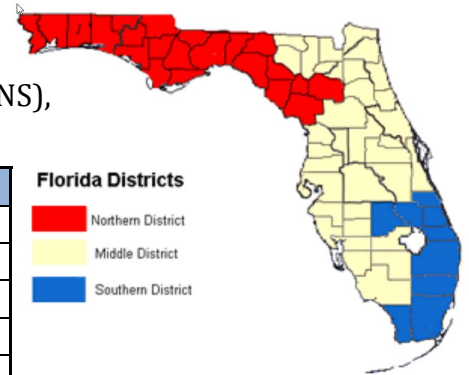
For more information on national bankruptcy numbers, see [Bankruptcy Filing Statistics](#) published by the AO on March 12, 2024. Local caseload information is published on our website monthly at www.flnb.uscourts.gov/court-filing-statistics.

2023 Caseload Breakdown - U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Northern District of Florida

Bankruptcy Case Openings	GVL	PNS	TLH	PCY	TOTAL
Ch 7	168	679	335	136	1318
Ch 11	6	20	18	5	49
Ch 12	0	0	0	0	0
Ch 13	58	242	152	61	513
Ch 15	0	0	0	0	0
Total	232	941	505	202	1880
Bankruptcy Case Activity	GVL	PNS	TLH	PCY	TOTAL
Reopenings	3	6	7	2	18
Split Cases	0	0	0	0	0
Interdistrict Transfer Cases	1	0	3	1	5
Intradistrict Transfer Cases	0	1	0	0	1
Conversions	2	14	13	0	29
Stay Motions	34	117	94	43	288
Bankruptcy Case Closings	GVL	PNS	TLH	PCY	TOTAL
Ch 7	156	637	292	135	1220
Ch 11	3	7	14	3	27
Ch 12	0	0	0	0	0
Ch 13	53	171	149	53	426
Ch 15	0	0	0	0	0
Total	212	815	455	191	1673
Adversary Case Openings	GVL	PNS	TLH	PCY	TOTAL
	6	15	11	6	38
Adversary Case Closings	GVL	PNS	TLH	PCY	TOTAL
	3	12	9	3	27
Pro se Cases Filed:	GVL	PNS	TLH	PCY	Total
Ch 7	14	29	59	10	112
Ch 11	0	0	2	0	2
Ch 12	0	0	0	0	0
Ch 13	15	36	21	8	80
Ch 15	0	0	0	0	0
Total	29	65	82	18	194

U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Florida 2024 Caseload Activity through March 30, 2024

The U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Florida is comprised of 23 counties in the panhandle and "big bend" region of the state, separated into four divisions: Gainesville (GVL), Pensacola (PNS), Tallahassee (TLH), and Panama City (PCY).



BK Case Openings	GVL	PNS	TLH	PCY	TOTAL
Ch 7	44	213	90	33	380
Ch 11	6	3	1	2	12
Ch 12	0	0	0	0	0
Ch 13	21	51	49	15	136
Ch 15	0	0	0	0	0
Total	71	267	140	50	528

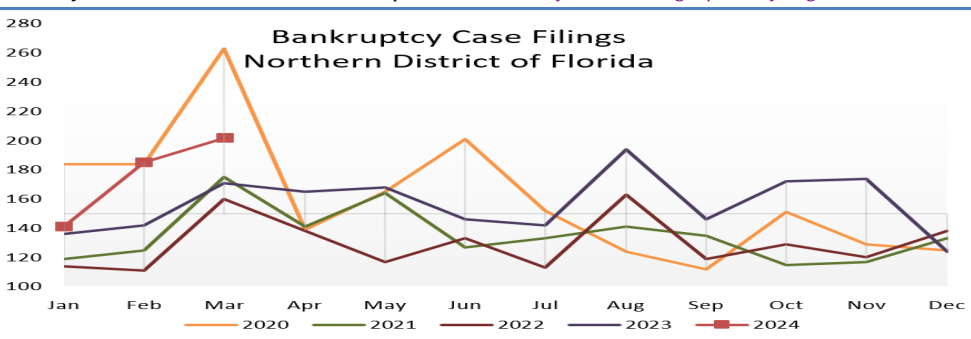
BK Activity	GVL	PNS	TLH	PCY	TOTAL
Reopenings	1	2	4	0	7
Split Cases	0	0	0	0	0
Interdistrict Transfer	0	0	0	0	0
Intradistrict Transfer	0	0	0	0	0
Conversions	2	6	2	0	10
Stay Motions	6	30	29	9	74

BK Case Closings	GVL	PNS	TLH	PCY	TOTAL
Ch 7	44	175	80	38	337
Ch 11	4	2	4	1	11
Ch 12	0	0	0	0	0
Ch 13	4	42	28	19	93
Ch 15	0	0	0	0	0
Total	52	219	112	58	441

Adversary	GVL	PNS	TLH	PCY	TOTAL
Case Openings	3	6	2	0	31
Case Closings	6	4	1	1	12

Pro se Cases Filed:	GVL	PNS	TLH	PCY	Total
Ch 7	5	9	11	2	27
Ch 11	0	0	0	0	0
Ch 12	0	0	0	0	0
Ch 13	5	7	3	2	17
Ch 15	0	0	0	0	0
Total	10	16	14	4	44

Monthly and annual caseload statistics are published at www.flnb.uscourts.gov/court-filing-statistics.



FLNB County	YTD
Alachua	54
Bay	23
Calhoun	3
Dixie	2
Escambia	136
Franklin	2
Gadsden	26
Gilchrist	3
Gulf	3
Holmes	6
Jackson	9
Jefferson	4
Lafayette	2
Leon	79
Levy	10
Liberty	4
Madison	5
Okaloosa	43
Santa Rosa	63
Taylor	5
Wakulla	13
Walton	26
Washington	6
Outside District	0
Outside Florida	0
Outside U.S.	1
Total Filings	528
Gainesville Div.	71
Pensacola Div.	268
Tallahassee Div.	139
Panama City Div.	50



U.S. Bankruptcy Court Northern District of Florida

Chief Bankruptcy Judge Karen K. Specie
Traci E. Abrams, Clerk of Court
110 East Park Avenue, Suite 100
Tallahassee, Florida 32301
(850) 521-5001 / (866) 639-4615

Please direct questions or comments about this newsletter to Julie.Gibson@flnb.uscourts.gov.

In today's hustle culture it's easy to feel sometimes that achievement and productivity are the only standards by which our value is measured. But it's crucial to remember that every success starts with a small step, an initial investment, a simple plan.

~ William A. Ward, Author

Upcoming Federal Holidays

The Court and Clerk's Office will be closed on the dates listed below in observance of the following national holidays*:

May 27	Memorial Day
June 19	Juneteenth Nat'l Indep. Day
July 4	Independence Day
September 2	Labor Day
October 14	Columbus Day
November 11	Veteran's Day
November 28	Thanksgiving
December 25	Christmas Day
January 1	New Year's Day
January 20	B'day of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
February 17	Washington's Birthday

**Observance of a holiday that falls on a Saturday or Sunday pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 6103(b) and/or Exec. Ord. 11582, Feb. 11, 1971.*

Contact Us

Audrey Thurman, Case Administrator	(850) 470-3061
Carolyn Romine, Case Administrator	(850) 470-3062
Janet Weems-Cainion, Courtroom Deputy & Calendar Clerk	(850) 521-5009
Jestin Hawkins, Case Administrator.....	(850) 521-5016
Latonia Isom, Operations Team Leader	(850) 521-5012
Sloane Akinsanya, Case Administrator	(850) 521-5010
Tammi Boswell, Director of Operations.....	(850) 521-5011
Clerk's Office Main Line	(850) 521-5001
Help Desk	(850) 521-5001 or (866) 639-4615
Help Desk Email.....	CMECF_HelpDesk@flnb.uscourts.gov

*Clerk's Office phones are answered 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on federal holidays or other days the court is closed. Case Administrators may assist with procedural or CM/ECF questions only. **We are not permitted to answer legal questions or to provide guidance as to the content or types of documents that may be required.***