

16th Judicial District Liaison Notes: Halleh Omid

Spoke with Family Court Facilitator, Daniel Ramirez. (719) 383-7136

Three courthouses: Bent-in Las Animas; Crowley-in Ordway; Otero-in La Junta

All DR/JV cases meet with Daniel as the Family Court Facilitator, regardless of whether attorneys on case. ISCs are often set 21-35 days out from filing when it is determined from the Petition that there are kid-related issues that need attention quickly. At the time of the ISC, Daniel tries to help the parties to see if they can reach a resolution, at least to some interim issues, in a role that is akin to a mediator. If the parties reach an agreement, Daniel will draft it or one of the attorneys will (if there is counsel). They do not have the court availability to read the ISC agreements onto the record, though.

Highest percentage of pro se population in all 22 of Colorado's judicial districts. Still at a record low. 85% of the population is pro se. They have a strong need for attorneys to practice in that district. The new SLRC, Geoff Barta. His contact info is 16thselhelp@judicial.state.co.us. Each month on the second Tuesday at the Woodrose Memorial Library in La Junta there is a self-help clinic in La Junta. The Court often has events on topics like APR, grandparent visitation etc. at the library, too.

The 16th Judicial District also has a strong need for mediators, which is why Daniel acts in that role at status conferences to move cases forward. If he thinks progress can be made, he will facilitate numerous status conferences to move the case forward. There is one private mediator in the area who is a prior county court judge. There are three ODR mediators but, they are located in Pueblo, so parties need to drive to Pueblo for mediation. They do not have other options like ENA either.

They have a District Court Magistrate, Sarah Zane, who focuses on domestic relations matters, but is only on the bench half-time. Temporary Orders can be set within a week to a few weeks. Temporary Orders Hearings last 30 minutes to 1 hour. Permanent Orders are also in front of Magistrate Zane. Daniel indicated that thus far no one has objected to her presiding over Permanent Orders. Permanent Orders are typically set on the 92nd day going forward. They are usually not set any longer than six months out from service of process. Almost all settings for Permanent Orders are a half-day or less.

If attorneys are appearing from outside of the District, the Court is fine with attorneys appearing by phone with notice to Daniel.

The parenting class is offered on the second Tuesday of the month at Otero Junior College from 5:45 p.m. until 9:00 p.m.

If there are issues with disclosures or discovery, typically Daniel will attempt to address these issues with the parties to get them back on track. If not, Magistrate Zane will set an in-person status conference.