



## Lane County Family Law Advisory Committee

Lane County Courthouse  
125 E. 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Eugene, OR 97401

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February 18, 2025

The Honorable Jay McAlpin  
Presiding Judge  
Lane County Circuit Court  
125 E 8th Ave, Eugene, OR 97401

Dear Judge McAlpin,

The Lane County Family Law Advisory Committee (LCFLAC) is a group of Lane County attorneys, judges, court staff and community members who are dedicated to discussing issues concerning family law and making recommendations to the Presiding Judge regarding the best ways to serve families in Lane County. The members of LCFLAC are writing to respectfully offer our support for the Chief Justice's budget request for two new judicial officers for the 2nd Judicial District (Lane County Circuit Court.) The Lane County Circuit Court has been allocated 15 judges for forty years. It is beyond time to adjust that number to reflect not only the growth of our community over the past forty years but the radical change that has occurred in the nature of the work the court does.

The additional judges will serve two purposes. First, funding for new judges will help provide badly needed relief to Lane County's justice system. They will provide relief to our current judges who are working at an unsustainable pace to keep up with oversized and growingly complex caseloads and meet the needs of our community members. Families in Lane County and all members of our community deserve access to justice and the time they need to present their case. Our current bench does the best they can to provide that for litigants, but we also know that, because the number of cases has increased dramatically over the last 40 years while the number of judges has remained constant, every hearing in Lane County is, and must, take place under the shadow of time constraints.

Second, funding for new judges will help Lane County's current bench continue the innovative work that Lane County Circuit Court has been known for. Lane County Circuit Court's Treatment Court was one of the first substance abuse treatment courts in the United States. Our community benefits from specialty courts for veterans, juveniles, and the mentally ill, which did not exist 40 years ago but are essential to address the needs of our community. Our very large number of self-represented litigants in family law cases are served by judicially led status conference dockets that help them navigate the court system without an attorney. Adding two new judges will help increase the ways families and children in Lane County can access relief for their pressing family law matters.

# Lane County Family Law Advisory Committee

Lane County judges are national, state, and local leaders in juvenile, criminal and family law. Our judges have the expertise to create innovative programs to address our community's problems. But without an investment in the increase of the Lane County bench, they will not be able to continue to do their current work, much less add to their workload. The result will be increased wait times for litigants to have their cases heard, and decreased time in which to present their cases.

Members in LCFLAC fully support the request for two additional judicial officers for Lane County. The investment in two new judges will be the deciding factor in whether our community is able to maintain our current level of judicial services.

Sincerely,



Erin A. Fennerty, Chair  
On behalf of the  
Lane County Family Law Advisory Committee