

**STATE OF INDIANA – COUNTY OF PULASKI
IN THE PULASKI CIRCUIT AND SUPERIOR COURTS**

**Notice of Proposed New Rule or Amendments to Local Court Rules
October 5, 2026**

In accordance with Trial Rule 81 of the Indiana Court Rules, the Pulaski Circuit and Superior Courts hereby give notice to the bar and the public that the Courts propose to amend the Local Rules on caseload allocation and the assignment of special judges in civil and criminal cases for the courts of record of Pulaski County, effective December 1, 2026.

All new text is shown by underlining and deleted text is shown by ~~striketrough~~. Supreme Court approval is required for Local Rules concerning caseload allocation and special judge assignments and will not take effect until approved by the Supreme Court.

Notice has been given to the public by posting on the website of the Pulaski County Clerk and at the Indiana Judiciary webpage for Local Rules (<https://www.in.gov/courts/publications/local-rules/>), and by furnishing a copy to the officers of the Pulaski County Bar Association. A paper copy of the proposed amended local rules will be made available for viewing in the office of the Clerk of Pulaski County, 110 East Main Street, Room 018, Winamac, Indiana 46996, during normal business hours.

The time period for the bar and the public to comment shall begin on October 5, 2026, and shall close on November 5, 2026. The proposed amendments to the rule will be adopted, modified, or rejected before November 13, 2026, and the final version of the rule will be submitted to the Indiana Supreme Court for review and approval not later than November 18, 2026.

Comments by the bar and the public should be made in writing to:

Hon. Crystal Kocher, Judge of the Pulaski Superior Court, Attn: Public Comment on Local Rules, Pulaski County Courthouse, 110 East Meridian Street, #200, Winamac, Indiana 46996.

DATED this 1st day of October 2026, on behalf of the Judges of Pulaski County.

_____/S/_____
Crystal Brucker Kocher, Judge
Pulaski Superior Court

LR66-AR-01(E)(6) CASELOAD ALLOCATION

(A) CRIMINAL, INFRACTION AND ORDINANCE VIOLATION CASES Criminal Cases shall be filed pursuant to LR66- AR-~~01~~(E)(6). Except as provided in LR66-AR-~~01~~(E)(6), all infraction and ordinance violation cases shall be assigned to the Superior Court.

(B) JUVENILE CASES

All juvenile cases, including paternity cases, shall be assigned to the Circuit Court.

(C) SMALL CLAIMS CASES

All small claims cases shall be filed in the Superior-Circuit Court.

(D) ALL OTHER CIVIL CASE TYPES

(1) The following cases shall be filed in the Circuit Court:

- a. Adoption
- b. Civil Collection
- c. Civil Tort
- d. Eviction
- e. Estate, Miscellaneous
- f. Estate, Supervised
- g. Estate, Unsupervised
- h. Guardianship
- i. Guardianship Miscellaneous
- j. Miscellaneous (civil)

(2) Cases other than those ~~mentioned~~ designated in this rule in the preceding paragraphs may be filed in either Circuit Court or Superior Court, at the discretion of the filing party.

(E) CASE TRANSFERS

~~However, nothing in this rule shall prohibit a~~ judge of ~~said one~~ Court ~~from may~~ transferring a case ~~from that Court~~ to the other Court as allowed by statute, or rule of trial procedure, or to ensure an even distribution of judicial workload between the courts of record in the county.

(F) RE-FILED CASES

Except when a change of venue is necessary, whenever a case is dismissed by action of the originating party, the case, if re-filed, must be assigned to the same court that received the original case.

(G) ANNUAL REVIEW OF CASELOAD ALLOCATION PLAN

On or before May 1 of each year the Judge of the Circuit Court and the Judge of the Superior Court shall meet to review the Weighted Caseload Measures statistics as calculated by the Division of State Court Administration for the preceding calendar year to determine whether any changes in the caseload allocation plan should be made.

**LR66-AR-01(E)(6) ASSIGNMENT OF CRIMINAL CASES PURSUANT TO
ADMINISTRATIVE RULE 1(E)(6)**

(A) All cases where the most serious charge is Murder; a Class A, B, or C felony; or a Level 1, 2, 3, or 4 felony, shall be filed in the Pulaski Circuit Court, except for charges in relation to violations of IC 9-30-10-17 (operating a vehicle after lifetime suspension), and as may be amended or recodified, shall be filed in the Pulaski Superior Court.

(B) All violations of IC 35-46-1-4 (neglect of a dependent and child selling) and 5 (non-support of a child), and as may be amended or recodified shall be filed in the Pulaski Circuit Court.

(C) Any misdemeanor or felony committed by a person less than eighteen (18) years of age which is currently excluded from the definition of delinquent act shall be filed in the Pulaski Circuit Court.

(D) Infractions committed by a person less than eighteen (18) years of age that are driving offenses involving alcohol or drugs shall be filed in the Pulaski Circuit Court. All other infractions shall continue to be filed in the Pulaski Superior Court.

(E) In the event a case charges both felony and misdemeanor offenses, the case shall be considered a felony for the application of this rule. Furthermore, in the event a case charges various degrees of felonies, the case shall be considered a felony of the highest degree charged for the application of this rule.

(F) All cases wherein the most serious charge is a Class D felony, a Level 5 felony, or a Level 6 felony, shall be assigned to the Pulaski Superior Court. All misdemeanors shall be assigned to the Pulaski Superior Court.

(G) Once assigned, a case cannot be reassigned to another judge if the second filing is based on the same underlying incident.

**SELECTION OF SUCCESSOR JUDGES
IN CRIMINAL CASES**

I. Upon the granting of a change of Judge, or the disqualification or recusal of the judge in a felony or misdemeanor case in Pulaski Circuit Court, the case shall be assigned to the Judge of the Pulaski Superior Court.

II. If the Judge of the Pulaski Superior Court cannot accept jurisdiction of the case, the case shall be reassigned to ~~the Judges a full-time judicial officer in Starke County in the following sequence of one of the following courts~~ on a rotating basis:

Starke Circuit Court Judge
Starke Circuit Court Magistrate

~~Cass Circuit Court
Cass Superior Court 1
Cass Superior Court 2
Fulton Circuit Court
Fulton Superior Court
Jasper Circuit Court
Jasper Superior Court
White Circuit Court
White Superior Court
LaPorte Circuit Court
LaPorte Superior Court #1
LaPorte Superior Court #2
LaPorte Superior Court #3
LaPorte Superior Court #4
LaPorte Circuit Court Magistrate #1
LaPorte Circuit Court Magistrate #2, and
LaPorte Superior Court Magistrate-~~

III. If a full-time judicial officer in Starke County is unable to accept jurisdiction of the special judge case, the case shall be assigned to a full-time judicial officer in District 3 in the following sequence on a rotating basis:

LaPorte Circuit Court
LaPorte Superior Court #1
LaPorte Superior Court #2
LaPorte Superior Court #3
LaPorte Superior Court #4
LaPorte Circuit Court Magistrate #1
LaPorte Circuit Court Magistrate #2
LaPorte Superior Court Magistrate

IV. If a full-time judicial officer in District 3 is unable to accept jurisdiction of the special judge case, the case shall be assigned to a full-time judicial officer in a county contiguous to Pulaski County in the following sequence on a rotating basis:

Cass Circuit Court
Cass Superior Court 1
Cass Superior Court 2
Fulton Circuit Court
Fulton Superior Court
Jasper Circuit Court
Jasper Superior Court
White Circuit Court
White Superior Court

V. A trial court may request the Indiana Supreme Court appoint a special judge in the following circumstances:

- a. no judge under the local rule is available for appointment; or
- b. the circumstance warrants selection of a special judge by the Indiana Supreme Court.

VI. The same procedure shall be followed if there is a change of Judge, disqualification or recusal of the Judge of the Pulaski Superior Court, and if the Judge of the Pulaski Circuit Court cannot accept jurisdiction, the case shall be reassigned as set forth above.

VII. If a party/defendant has multiple cases to be transferred/reassigned all transferring/reassigned cases shall be transferred to the same special/new judge.

**LR66-TR79-01 APPOINTMENT OF A SPECIAL JUDGE IN CIVIL
CASES PURSUANT TO TRIAL RULE 79(H)**

(a) — Cases involving disqualification or recusal

I. In the event a judge grants a change of judge or disqualifies ~~and or~~ recuses under Trial Rule 79(C), and a special judge is not selected under Trial Rule 79(D), then the clerk of the court shall appoint as special judge the other Pulaski County Judge.

II. ; and if that the other Pulaski County judge does not qualify as a special judge, the clerk of the court shall appoint ~~on a rotating basis~~ a special judge from the following list of full-time judicial officers in the following sequence and on a rotating basis:

Starke Circuit Court Judge
Starke Circuit Court Magistrate

III. If a full-time judicial officer in Starke County is unable to accept jurisdiction of the special judge case, the case shall be assigned to a full-time judicial officer in the following sequence on a rotating basis:

Jasper Circuit Court Judge
Jasper Superior Court Judge
White Circuit Court Judge
White Superior Court Judge
Fulton Circuit Court Judge
Fulton Superior Court Judge
LaPorte Circuit Court Judge
LaPorte Superior Court #1 Judge
LaPorte Superior Court #2 Judge
LaPorte Superior Court #3 Judge
LaPorte Superior Court #4 Judge
LaPorte Circuit Court Magistrate #1
LaPorte Circuit Court Magistrate #2
LaPorte Superior Court Magistrate

If the judge selected to serve is disqualified, ineligible, or is excused from service, then Clerk of the Court shall appoint the next judge on the list.

IV. If no judge on the appointment list is eligible to serve as special judge or the particular circumstances in the case so warrant, the then presiding judge in the case shall certify the matter to the Indiana Supreme Court for the appointment of a special judge pursuant to TR79(H)(3).

(a) Cases involving a change of judge

~~In the event a special judge selected is not selected under Trial Rule 79(D), then the clerk of the court shall appoint as special judge the other Pulaski County Judge; and if that judge does not qualify as a special judge, the clerk of the court shall appoint on a rotating basis a special judge from the following list of judicial officers:~~

~~Starke Circuit Court Judge
Starke Circuit Court Magistrate
Jasper Circuit Court Judge
Jasper Superior Court Judge
White Circuit Court Judge
White Superior Court Judge
Fulton Circuit Court Judge
Fulton Superior Court Judge
LaPorte Circuit Court Judge
LaPorte Superior Court #1 Judge
LaPorte Superior Court #2 Judge
LaPorte Superior Court #3 Judge~~

~~LaPorte Superior Court #4 Judge~~
~~LaPorte Circuit Court Magistrate #1~~
~~LaPorte Circuit Court Magistrate #2~~
~~LaPorte Superior Court Magistrate~~

~~If the judge selected to serve is disqualified, ineligible, or is excused from service, then clerk of the court shall appoint the next judge on the list. If no judge on the list is eligible to serve as special judge or the particular circumstances in the case so warrant, the then presiding judge in the case shall certify the matter to the Indiana Supreme Court for the appointment of a special judge pursuant to TR79(H)(3).~~

~~If a party/defendant has multiple cases to be transferred/reassigned all transferring/reassigned cases shall be transferred to the same special/new judge.~~