



## ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURT PROCESS SERVER PROGRAM DESCRIPTION THIRD JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

### **Program Description:**

The Administrative Office of the Court certifies and regulates Certified Process Servers in the Third Judicial Circuit. These individuals are responsible for serving initial non-enforceable civil process issued by the courts of the Third Judicial Circuit. The purpose of civil process is to provide notice to defendants and other interested persons that a judicial action or proceeding has been initiated. The court may not proceed with a judicial action/proceeding until delivery of process has been confirmed.

### **Certification Requirements – You must:**

- ✓ Be at least 18 years of age.
- ✓ Have no mental or legal disability.
- ✓ Be a permanent resident of the State of Florida.
- ✓ Complete an application.
- ✓ Pay a \$100.00 processing fee and \$24.00 background check fee.
- ✓ File a certificate of good conduct (included in application materials) which certifies that there is no pending criminal case against you, that there is no record of any felony conviction against you, and that there is no record of a conviction of a misdemeanor involving moral turpitude or dishonesty within the past five years.
- ✓ Pass a background investigation including a review of your criminal record, should one exist.
- ✓ Pass the Certified Civil Process Servers examination.
- ✓ Purchase a \$5,000 surety bond and keep bond in good standing.
- ✓ Take the Oath of Office.

**Application:** Download the application packet [<LINK TO APPLICATION PACKET>](#) or you may pick up an application from the Administrative Office of the Court. Once completed, please forward the application and required fees to the:

Administrative Office of the Court  
Columbia County Courthouse  
Attention: Personnel Department  
173 NE Hernando Avenue, Room 408  
Lake City, FL 32055

**Once Certified:** Your name will be added to the list of Certified Civil Process Servers maintained by the Third Judicial Circuit. Having your name on this list allows you to serve non-enforceable civil process in the Third Judicial Circuit. This is not a position that is offered by the State or County. You will be required to solicit your own business.

**Related Local Administrative Orders:** [<LINK TO ADMINSTRATIVE ORDER 2009-006>](#)

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What does "service" mean as it relates to process servers?**

"Service" is the official delivery of legal papers on parties, witnesses or other people involved in a case.

### **Why do legal papers need to be officially served?**

Official service of a summons and a copy of your complaint or petition is necessary to start a legal action by giving the other side formal notice there is a lawsuit filed against them.

Otherwise, your case cannot proceed through the court system. After serving the other parties in your civil case, the process server files a return of service form with the Court so that the judge will know service has been performed according to the law. Civil process servers also serve subpoenas (orders to appear in court or produce documents) and other legal notices and may be called upon to testify in Court if there is a question about proper service.

### **Who do I contact to serve my legal papers?**

Contact the Administrative Office of the Court or click link below for a list of Certified Civil Process Servers approved by the Chief Judge of the Third Judicial Circuit of Florida.

[<LINK TO LIST OF CERTIFIED CIVIL PROCESS SERVERS>](#)

**Does the Sheriff also do this?** Yes. The Sheriff's Office has a Civil Process Bureau which can serve legal papers at similar costs. The Court's program is not intended to compete with the Sheriff's program, but rather to assist with serving legal papers in the high number of civil cases filed in the Circuit.

### **How do I have legal papers served on a person or business outside of the Third Judicial Circuit?**

You may contact the Sheriff's Office in the county and state where the person or the business can be served. The Clerk's Office in that county may also be able to assist you.

### **What laws govern Certified Civil Process Servers?**

Chapter 48, Florida Statutes, in particular Sections 48.25 - 48.31, the "Florida Certified Process Servers Act."

### **Whom do I contact for further information?**

Administrative Office of the Court

Columbia County Courthouse

173 NE Hernando Avenue, Room 408

Lake City, FL 32055

(386) 719-7428

Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (excluding court holidays)