

## Amended Report on Peer Group Analysis

As requested by the PIE Committee, what follows is a peer group analysis using the BEBR estimates of population for April 1, 2023 and the preliminary weighted cases for the 2022/2023 fiscal year.

Pursuant to Paragraph 28.35(2)(f), Florida Statutes, approving the proposed budgets submitted by clerks of the court is one of the duties of the Florida Clerks of Court Operations Corporation. As part of that approval process, Sub-paragraph 28.35(2)(f)2. requires the Corporation to “[p]repare a cost comparison of similarly situated clerks of the court, based upon *county population and numbers of filings*, using the standard list of court related functions specified in paragraph (3)(a).” (emphasis added) Based upon this requirement, this analysis utilized the following information:

1. The University of Florida BEBR estimates of population for each county as of April 1, 2023;
2. The preliminary total weighted cases reported by each county for the 2022/2023 fiscal year.

This analysis kept in mind the rule from the currently adopted peer group study that no county should be in a peer group with a county with more than twice its population. Likewise, this rule was applied to total weighted case numbers.

An analysis of case counts, costs, and budgets requires statistical calculations. Many times, the first step in those statistical calculations is the determination of the standard deviation. Generally, after this determination is made, a reviewer looks for those data points which are at least two standard deviations from the mean. With this being the case, it can be argued that peer groups with only one, two, or three members should not be used, as no meaningful standard deviation analysis will occur with data from so few members. Although internally the CCOC budget committee compares all counties, the Legislature apparently envisioned some type of peer group system for budget comparison purposes.

CCOC is required by Sub-paragraph 28.35(2)(f)2. to prepare a cost comparison of similarly situated clerks, and by Sub-paragraph 28.35(2)(f)9. to “identify the budget of any clerk which exceeds the average budget of similarly situated clerks by more than 10 percent.” While it could be argued that no county is similarly situated to Miami-Dade, the caseload per population studies placed Miami-Dade in various places along the number of cases or number of weighted cases per population continuum. Therefore, Miami-Dade is capable of being compared and could be placed in a multi-county peer group. If placed in a multi-county peer group, Miami-Dade will be identified as a county with a budget which exceeds the average budget of the counties in the peer group by more than 10 percent. Likewise, on the small county end of the scale, small weighted case numbers also deserve some special consideration.

The evaluations of possible peer groups by total population and by weighted case count

each yielded eight peer groups with slight variations. In order to provide meaningful peer groups for statistical purposes it is necessary to combine the rules for initially determining peer groups with rules for creating statistically meaningful peer groups. For example, if peer groups are created using weighted case count numbers, and the rule of no county shall be in a peer group with another county which has more than twice its case count numbers is applied, eight peer groups would be created, but the first peer group would consist of only Lafayette, Liberty, and Union counties. As no helpful statistical analysis could be made by simply comparing the smallest three counties to each other, the chart below shows Glades in Peer Group 1. Therefore, depending on which numbers are being used, adjustments to at least one end of the scale will be necessary.

Having said the above, it is my recommendation that we continue to use eight (8) peer groups. Further, it appears the similarly situated counties should be based upon either population or weighted case counts in order to be consistent with Sub-paragraph 28.35(2)(f)2. For budgeting purposes, pure case counts without workload weighting are not very helpful. Whether a peer group is based upon population or weighted workloads, questions will always be asked about the other measure; therefore, either method seems appropriate for CCOC purposes. Based upon the current case weighting and a hybrid of the guidelines mentioned above,

- 1) No less than four (4) counties per peer group,
- 2) No county in a population peer group with a county with more than twice its population, and
- 3) No county in a weighted case peer group with a county with more than twice its total weighted cases,

the possible peer groups by population and by weighted case count would be:

County	Population Estimate April 1, 2023		County	Preliminary Weighted Cases 2022/2023	
Liberty	7,977	1	Lafayette	3,795.50	1
Lafayette	8,074	1	Liberty	5,919.50	1
Glades	12,591	1	Union	7,200.00	1
Franklin	12,971	1	Glades*	11,258.50	1
Hamilton	13,671	1	Gulf	11,386.00	2
Calhoun	13,816	1	Gilchrist	12,098.00	2
Jefferson	15,402	1	Jefferson	12,484.00	2
Union	16,137	2	Calhoun	13,072.50	2
Gulf	16,323	2	Franklin	13,394.50	2
Dixie	17,271	2	Hamilton	13,582.50	2
Madison	18,698	2	Dixie	14,764.50	2
Gilchrist	19,123	2	Holmes	15,449.00	2

Holmes	19,910	2	Taylor	18,856.00	2
Taylor	21,686	2	Washington	20,625.00	2
Washington	25,497	2	Baker	21,348.50	2
Hardee	25,645	2	Madison	23,752.00	3
Bradford	27,389	2	Hardee	24,591.50	3
Baker	28,339	2	Wakulla	25,698.50	3
DeSoto	34,974	3	DeSoto	30,928.00	3
Wakulla	36,168	3	Hendry	31,110.50	3
Okeechobee	39,591	3	Suwannee	33,002.00	3
Hendry	40,895	3	Gadsden	33,838.50	3
Gadsden	44,421	3	Bradford	34,291.00	3
Levy	45,283	3	Jackson	35,224.00	3
Suwannee	45,448	3	Okeechobee	36,203.00	3
Jackson	48,982	3	Levy	37,420.00	3
Columbia	72,191	4	Nassau	59,277.00	4
Putnam	75,906	4	Columbia	59,413.50	4
Walton	83,342	4	Highlands	67,616.00	4
Monroe	84,511	4	Putnam	68,814.00	4
Nassau	100,763	4	Flagler	76,159.50	4
Highlands	104,385	4	Sumter	79,327.00	4
Flagler	130,756	4	Walton	87,634.50	4
Sumter	155,318	5	Indian River	96,387.50	4
Citrus	162,240	5	Citrus	107,520.50	4
Martin	162,847	5	Martin	112,597.00	4
Indian River	167,781	5	Monroe	127,445.50	5
Bay	187,545	5	St. Johns	131,573.50	5
Santa Rosa	202,772	5	Hernando	143,303.50	5
Charlotte	204,126	5	Clay	149,950.50	5
Hernando	204,265	5	Charlotte	155,263.00	5
Okaloosa	219,260	5	Okaloosa	159,894.00	5
Clay	231,042	5	Alachua	187,429.50	5
Alachua	293,040	5	Sarasota	193,082.00	5
Leon	301,724	5	Leon	204,552.50	5
St. Johns	315,317	6	Bay	207,656.00	5
Escambia	333,452	6	Collier	229,643.00	5
St. Lucie	368,628	6	Lake	245,441.50	5
Collier	399,480	6	Manatee	247,722.00	5
Marion	403,966	6	Seminole	247,758.00	5
Lake	414,749	6	Escambia	249,165.50	5
Osceola	439,225	6	Marion	261,608.50	6
Manatee	439,566	6	St. Lucie	329,224.00	6
Sarasota	464,223	6	Osceola	332,973.00	6
Seminole	486,839	6	Santa Rosa	339,737.00	6
Volusia	583,505	6	Pasco	351,183.50	6
Pasco	610,743	6	Brevard	394,200.00	6
Brevard	640,773	7	Volusia	568,161.50	7
Polk	797,616	7	Lee	569,245.50	7

Lee	800,989	7	Polk	628,485.00	7
Pinellas	974,689	7	Pinellas	742,045.50	7
Duval	1,051,278	7	Duval	1,030,510.50	7
Orange	1,492,951	8	Palm Beach	1,133,560.50	7
Palm Beach	1,532,718	8	Orange	1,634,672.50	8
Hillsborough	1,541,531	8	Hillsborough	1,733,540.50	8
Broward	1,973,579	8	Broward	1,748,123.00	8
Miami-Dade	2,768,954	8	Miami-Dade	3,821,240.00	8

\*Glades was placed in Peer Group 1 although they have slightly more than double Lafayette's total weighted cases. Placing Glades in Peer Group 1 will allow a somewhat more meaningful statistical analysis of Group 1, if such an analysis is deemed necessary.

I believe using either peer group method will satisfy the statutory requirements. Further, in an effort to be thorough, both might be used. Regardless of the choice, the analysis of case counts in order to determine outliers will continue to use population compared to number of cases across all counties in order to arrive at accurate weighted case counts, not just within peer groups.