



Court Improvement Program

Community Improvement Councils News

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Save the Date

2017 Community Improvement Council Summit

September 27-29, 2017

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Plans for the Upcoming CIC Summit

With the funding of the CIP Training Grant for fiscal year 2017, plans for the CIC Summit are moving forward. The newly renovated Renaissance Hotel in Reno will be the venue for the Summit. Judge Stephen Rubin will join Senior Justice Nancy Saitta as judicial facilitators. The curriculum will include a judicial round table discussion the afternoon of September 27 with a full day of

sessions on September 28, culminating with action planning the morning of September 29.

As in previous years, teams of six Community Improvement Members will be funded to attend the CIC Summit. The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges will once again assist CIP with planning and conducting the Summit.

If you have training suggestions, please contact Kathie Malzahn-Bass

CIP Fully Funded for Another Year

During a national conference call on May 9, 2017, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Children's Bureau notified CIPs that funding for the CIP Data and Training Grants had been restored for 2017 ONLY. The larger issue of reauthorization remains unresolved. To procure the funds, since CIPs had already applied for the funds last year, they simply needed to update their strategic plans to support the joint child welfare/CIP project (the Juvenile Dependency Mediation Program), and the efforts to

improve hearing quality and legal representation of the agency, parents, and/or children.

The Children's Bureau notified CIP on June 23, 2017 that it was awarded a total of \$137,072 for the federal fiscal year 2017 Basic Grant; and \$127,975 each for the fiscal year 2017 CIP Data and Training Grants.

CIP continues to work with national entities to resolve the reauthorization problem.

For More Information
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Kathie Malzahn-Bass

National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges' Studies Confirm: Nevada Mediation Programs Success

- 85% of mediations come to agreement (JDMP)
- More mediated dependency cases achieved permanency and sooner than non-mediated dependency cases (2nd JD)
- Mediated cases have fewer continued court hearings and more vacated hearings than non-mediated cases (2nd JD)
- “Mediation is a human place for difficult discussions and decisions.” Emilie Meyer

The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges conducted 1 outcome and 2 process evaluations on mediation in Nevada this year.

During the course of the fiscal year, 93 mediations were ordered in the Juvenile Dependency Mediation Program (JDMP), 9 mediations could not be conducted because significant participants failed to attend resulting in 84 mediations being conducted throughout the state. Seventy-one (71) or 85 percent of these mediations came to full or partial agreement. The use of mediation is increasing and is successful. It helped 141 children achieve permanency at an average of cost of \$274.47 per child.

In the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges' process study of the JDMP, among the key findings is that the majority, 98%, of parents and system stakeholders actively support and are very satisfied with JDMP. Ninety-nine percent (99%) of both stakeholders and parents felt that they had an opportunity to voice their opinion. One hundred percent (100%) of the parents participating in mediation felt fairly treated and that the mediator had clearly explained the process. In the 2nd JD, the impact evaluation found that more of the mediated dependency cases achieved permanency and achieved it earlier than the control group. Mediated dependency cases experienced fewer continued court hearings and substantially more vacated court hearings than the control group.

None of these statistics describe that success as well as this description of mediation in the 2nd JD:

A recent mediation was a platform for a young mother to be heard and to get recognition for hard choices made in the interest of her child. The question on the table was whether or not the mother should relinquish her parental rights in exchange for post-adoption contact with her son. The mother herself had been in the foster care system. She expressed support for her son having a better life than she could provide, but was hesitant to agree to relinquish without an identified family. She wanted to make sure everyone there – the District Attorney, social workers, and her own attorney – understood that she wasn't simply delaying. This meant something to her.

She said that when she was in the system, one day her mother just never came around again – there was no goodbye or I love you. She was just gone. She expressed not wanting that for her son. She wants him to know she loves him and believes that his new family is good for him. She wants to give him permission to love and embrace his new family.

Based on her own experience, to do this requires that love and acceptance first come from her. To accomplish this important piece – to right something that had happened to her and she didn't want to happen to her son – she had to know who the family would be that would love and raise him. This insightful young woman, who had experienced a tough life and was still fighting addiction and mental illness, brought all in the room to tears. By having the opportunity to explain her reasoning, face-to-face in mediation, everyone came to an understanding. The resolution in this mediation was to hold off until the adoptive family was identified and the mother could provide that transition to her son.

Mediation offered this mother an opportunity for substantive input and thoughtful decision-making. As this case also illustrates, mediation can be an agent of healing. Former parent's counsel Emilie Meyer, perhaps said it best when she observed, “Dependency mediation creates a human place for these discussions.”

JDMP is expanding in the new fiscal year to include the 2nd Judicial District. DCFS notified CIP on May 31, 2017 that it had been awarded a \$65,000 VOCA grant to continue JDMP. CIP is submitting another VOCA grant application to allow for expanded use of JDMP.

On-Line Training Under Development

In conjunction with the AOC's Judicial Education Unit, CIP is developing the following training opportunities for CICs.

* **Indian Child Welfare Act Regulations:**

The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and CIP are developing an on-line Indian Child Welfare Act training for Nevada around the new ICWA regulations. This will be 3-module training similar to the on-line Attorney Training designed specifically for the judiciary, but appropriate for all dependency court stakeholders. This training is expected to be released by September 1, 2017.

* **Legal Representation of Children:**

During his June CIC meeting, Judge Stockard pointed out that with the passage of SB305, Nevada's attorneys are going to need training on how to represent children in dependency cases. Fortunately Nevada has a home-grown expert in Janice Wolf, Directing Attorney of the Children's Attorneys Project at the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada, who is willing to lead a team of judges, deputy district attorney and deputy attorney general in presenting this multi-module training for attorneys who would like to be appointed to represent children.

* **Overview of Processes and Impact of Juvenile Dependency Mediation in Nevada:**

Faculty is being selected and modules are being developed.

* **Developmental Science and Child Welfare: A More Child-Centered Court Practice Model:**

This on-demand webinar series comprised of five topics is taught by Dr. Charles H. Zeanah. Anticipated release date is September 30, 2017.

* **Preventing Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children:**

Faculty is being selected and modules are being developed.

If you have other training suggestions, please contact
Kathie Malzahn-Bass

What Children's Attorneys Should Know About Trauma

To access the article,
please cut and paste the
following link:
[https://
www.americanbar.org/
groups/child_law.html](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/child_law.html)

The ABA Center on Children and the Law, in collaboration with the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, is pleased to share TRAUMA: What Child Welfare Attorneys Should Know. This resource provides practical information about trauma-informed legal advocacy by attorneys representing children, parents, and child welfare agencies.

This resource is intended to strengthen advocacy, improve attorney-client relationships, and promote appropriate screening, in-depth assessment, and evidence-based treatment. In addition, awareness of secondary traumatic stress can improve prevention, identification, and self-care among legal professionals.

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In 2010, each of the State's ten judicial districts created a Community Improvement Council (CIC) that focused on identifying barriers to timely permanent placement of children at risk. July 2015, the 11th JD was created. The CICs have been meeting regularly in their communities and at annual Summits where they have learned to interpret data specific to their districts, while creating strategies to reduce the amount of time that it takes to move cases involving children at risk through the court process. The overriding focus, in addition to the safety of the child, is to create an environment where the best decisions are made for each child.

**CIP Working for the Protection &
 Permanency of Dependent Children**
 Visit Our Web Site
<http://cip.nvcourts.gov>

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