



Court Improvement Program

Community Improvement Councils Quarterly News July-September 2014

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8th Judicial District Receives Technical Assistance to Help Court Improve Information Quality

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On September 25 and 26, the 8th Judicial District Court conducted a meeting with all dependency court judicial officers to discuss how the court can support quality information gathering necessary to make child safety decisions at the initial hearing as advocated in Bench Card A from the *Child Safety: A Guide for Judges and Attorneys*.

They considered both the court's capacity to prepare for the initial hearing and its capacity going forward to the next hearing. They discussed what the Clark County Department of Family Services (DFS) should expect the judges to ask them; what the judges can expect DFS to have done and to provide the court; how the court can work with DFS at that initial hearing to determine what needs to be done before the next hearing.

How does the bench have to work differently at the initial hearing to improve the quality of information available to make decisions about child safety and what does it have to do to prepare itself to do that?

Once those questions are answered how will the court know it is actually doing those things and what the impact of what they are doing is on outcomes?

DFS has a plan to improve its capacity to gather the information. As the maker of reasonable and active efforts findings the court plans to develop the capacity to know what the agency is supposed to be doing and hold hearings that verify the agency is doing it. The ultimate objective is to collaborate on the common goal of ensuring that sufficient information is available to make decisions about child safety.

Leadership: Credibility in Action

Presented by Judge Kevin S. Burke

The Nevada Association of Court Executives and AOC Judicial Education presented a webinar in which Kevin Burke, a District Judge in Hennepin County, Minnesota, discussed how court leaders can foster change and trust, and work to improve morale and the administration of justice. To access Judge Burke's presentation and the course materials, copy and paste the link below.

<http://nvcourtsdistanceed.com/course/view.php?id=54>

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7th Judicial District's CIC Considering Process to Handle Parental Orders of No Contact with Their Removed Children

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During its recent CIC meeting, the 7th Judicial District discussed how to handle the situation in which another court currently exercising jurisdiction in a criminal case has ordered parents to have no contact with their children while

child welfare is advocating in their safety or case plan that it is in the children's best interest to visit with their parents. If other courts are grappling with situations in which no contact orders may be appropriate in the criminal case, but

not necessarily in the child's best interest please consider sharing your solutions or ideas with either Judge Dobrescu or Judge Fairman.

Judge Rogers Honored

During the 2014 CIC Summit, Judge Rogers, 3rd Judicial District (JD) Court, was recognized by Justice Saitta for his outstanding contributions to the success of the 3rd JD's CIC and for his dedication to improving the safety, well-being and permanency of children.



2nd Judicial District's Protective Custody Restructuring

The 2nd Judicial District Court began implementation of a newly restructured protective custody (PC) hearing last May. The court docket begins with a conference of the professionals, without clients present, for a discussion of the cases to include a description from the social worker and exchange of evidentiary material. The Public Defender's investigators meet with the parents and provide overall information.

The facts supporting the removal of the child are being orally stipulated to in court. The social workers are sworn-in to confirm that the stipulation reasonably reflects their understanding of the case. Parents are being advised that the petition may address additional safety concerns that may not have been specifically addressed in the stipulation.

The Public Defender's Office

indicates that the Office has represented 72 parents at the PC hearing during the first two months this new process was in place. Earlier parental representation allows the parents to establish a positive and forward looking attitude earlier with less focus on the adversarial portions of the hearing. By the time the petition is filed, the parents know their attorneys.

The Court is now working on possible ways to measure the progress of the restructured process.

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CASA of Churchill County off to a Quick Start

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CASA of Churchill County in the 10th Judicial District (JD) kicked off with an Informational Event which attracted 35 attendees. Of the 35, 15 indicated a strong interest in becoming advocates and the others were willing to be a Friend of CASA and volunteer to fund raise or assist in other areas. They have developed training manuals and standard operating procedures, and began a "Kids' Klost" that is

run by the Friends of CASA. The CASA Project Manager has been sworn in as a CASA and has been assigned two cases. She started training 10 new CASAs in September. Weekly training includes attending court hearings, a mock court hearing, how to write court reports, and on-line National CASA classes. The Project Manager is practicing the principles of continual quality improvement.

When it was noted that the class was overwhelmed by the amount of new information, she postponed moving on to the next scheduled class and repeated the training. The 10th JD is also evaluating its need for a full-time project manager given that she is actually monitoring the CASAs to ensure that their tasks are completed and they are following the procedures developed.

November is National Adoption Month



National Adoption Month Website Launches

The Children's Bureau, within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families, is pleased to announce the launch of the 2014 National Adoption Month website, created in partnership with Child Welfare Information Gateway, its information service, and AdoptUSKids.

National Adoption Month (NAM) draws attention to the urgent need for permanent families for the more than 102,000 children and youth waiting for adoption in foster care. This year's NAM theme, "Promoting and Supporting Sibling Connections," emphasizes the critical role sibling relationships play in helping to promote permanency for children in care. The NAM website offers a variety of audience-specific resources:

Professionals can find information to help them promote and support sibling connections, recruit adoptive families, and see examples of how other States are promoting permanency for siblings and youth.

Adoptive parents can find information on adopting siblings from foster care, learn what permanency means, and view powerful videos from youth and other adoptive families.

Adopted people can find information on openness in adoption and search and reunion.

Birth parents can find information on kinship adoption/adoption by relatives, openness in adoption, and search and reunion.

Youth can learn about how to get involved in their permanency plans, stay connected with adults and other teens through social media, find out about the benefits of being safe online, and more.

For more information copy and paste the link below:

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/adoption/nam/#twtr=pro>

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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. 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://www.nevadajudiciary.us/
 index.php/
 courtimprovementprogram](http://www.nevadajudiciary.us/index.php/courtimprovementprogram)

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