



Court Improvement Program

Community Improvement Councils Quarterly News July-September 2015

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2015 Community Improvement Council Summit



Eighty-eight Come Together to Learn and Share at the 2015 CIC Summit

Eleven Community Improvement Councils (CICs) converged at the National Judicial College to learn about specific strategies to improve dependency hearing quality under the facilitative guidance of the Honorable Katherine Lucero, Superior Court of Santa Clara County.

The CIC action plans for the upcoming year reflect lessons learned during the panel discussions and workshops on Nevada specific best practices. Several courts plan to conduct trauma audits, provide trauma-informed trainings, and improve the physical court with additional signage and rooms for children, parents and attorneys. Most CICs plan to improve timeliness data; many intend to implement the "Guide to Integrating Continuous Quality Improvements into the Work of the Community Improvement Councils" and seek assistance from the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

Several CICs are planning to reorganize around the principles shared during the Capacity Building panel discussion. Including children in the courtroom and adding dependency mediation to the courts' strategies were also popular ideas. The overarching theme in all the action plans was communication and collaboration.

To see the CQI Guide for Community Improvement Councils, copy, paste and click on "A CQI Guide for Community Improvement Councils".

<http://nvcourts.gov/AOC/Templates/documents.aspx?folderID=10283>



Blue Ribbon for Kids Commission Forms a Child Dependency Court Rules Committee

There are no uniform rules of child dependency procedure in Nevada and much of the dependency practice is inconsistent with the current rules of civil procedure. Because child dependency is a highly specialized area of the law, the Blue Ribbon for Kids Commission believed that it needs its own rules and recommended appointment of a statewide committee to develop rules of child dependency procedure. Brigid Duffy, Clark County Chief Deputy District Attorney, is co-chairing this committee with The Honorable Gerald Hardcastle, Ret. The Committee members include Clark County Chief Deputy Special Public Defender Melinda Simpkins, Janice Wolf, managing attorney for the Children’s Attorneys Project at Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada, Erika Pike Turner, Esq., Washoe County Chief Public Defender Kathy O’Leary, Washoe County Chief Deputy District Attorney Jeff Martin, and Nye County Chief Deputy District Attorney Tim Sutton.

The Committee will be addressing priority issues of motion practice and discovery to create an effective and uniform system that is predictable and timely.

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The Nevada Coalition to Prevent Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children

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The growing awareness of child sex trafficking in the United States requires government and child welfare to reevaluate old policies and develop new procedures to identify and serve victims. The recognition of the connection between child welfare and sex trafficking is fairly recent. The Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act, P.L. 113-183, was signed into law in September 2014. In May of this year, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 was enacted resulting in changes to CAPTA re-

quiring states to consider any child identified as a victim of sex trafficking to be defined as a victim of “child abuse and neglect” and “sexual abuse.”

The organizational meeting of the Nevada Coalition to Prevent Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children will take place October 27, 2015. This first meeting is designed to be a policy development meeting to begin to address Nevada’s response to the sex trafficking provisions of P.L. 113-183 and improve identification of

and outcomes for youth at risk of sexual exploitation. The Children’s Bureau has encouraged CIPs to participate in this project because effectively meeting these new mandates will require strong collaboration and cross-system coordination among child welfare and other youth-serving agencies including the courts. Justice Saitta will lead this first meeting.

Indian Child Welfare Act Guidelines

Went into effect February 25, 2015

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Assistant Secretary Washburn announced revised guidelines to ensure that native children and families receive the full protection of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) - *the first such update since it was issued over 35 years ago.*

Guidelines clarify tribal authority, responsibilities of state courts and agencies in Indian child custody proceedings to protect tribal children and their families.

These revised guidelines were not mentioned in the ICWA handout distributed at the recent CIC Summit, "Tribal Courts in Nevada Alive and Well." To ensure that you include the most up-to-date information in your decision making, the link below will take you to the updated guidelines posted on CIP's website, just copy, paste and click on "Updated ICWA Guidelines":

<http://nvcourts.gov/AOC/Templates/documents.aspx?folderID=10283>

10th Judicial District Seeks Continual Quality Improvement Assistance

The 10th Judicial District has asked the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) to help identify atypical cases that may be impacting their time to permanency statistics. NCJFCJ is conducting a SPSS (statistical software package for social sciences) analysis of their raw data. The CIC will use this analysis to drill down into the cases that exceeded the statutory requirements to determine why this happened and how the process may be improved.



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Attorney Standards

As many of you learned during the Summit, the Fourth Judicial District Court petitioned the Nevada Supreme Court to amend its rules of practice to include standards of practice for parents' attorneys in 432B cases (ADKT 0509). The 4th JD's CIC adapted the American Bar Association "Standards of Practice for Attorneys Representing Parents in Abuse and Neglect Cases" to comply with Nevada law and the practices of the 4th JD. These Standards help to further the goal of the CIC to improve the quality of the dependency hearings. To review the court petition, copy and paste the link provided below:

<http://caseinfo.nvsupremecourt.us/public/caseView.do?csIID=37110>

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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://nevadajudiciary.us/index.php/
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