

2015 Annual Report

NEVADA Court Improvement Program



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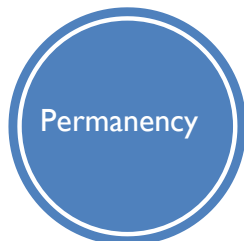
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Nevada Court Improvement Program 2015 Annual Self-Assessment Report

The purpose of this report is to create an opportunity to reflect on what you are doing, why you are doing it and if efforts are having the intended results. Questions are designed to solicit candid responses that help you identify what is working well, areas that need improvement and the type of support that would be most helpful. This is intended to be a helpful tool for you and a helpful tool for us to identify how best to use our resources.

The report is made of 7 sections with corresponding questions. Section I allows you to identify two high resource and or high priority projects and discuss them in-depth from a CQI perspective. Section II focuses on current priority areas and driving forces within your state that may be affecting your work. Section III requests a concise accounting of projects/activities in specific topical areas. Section IV focuses on collaborative efforts. Section V centers on CQI needs. Section VI asks you to do a self-assessment of your CIP's current capacity. Section VII provides a space for you to report on your timeliness and other performance measures.

I. CQI Analyses of Projects

*Identify **two (2)** of your highest priority/highest resource CIP projects that were in some stage of the CQI process in FY 2015. Review and respond to the questions below about these projects. We understand you may be early in the process and may not be able to answer all of these questions. If applicable, indicate where you were in the process when the fiscal year ended and what plans you have for furthering the work.*

Two of Nevada CIP's highest priority and most resource intensive projects are the Judicial Community Improvement Councils (CICs) and dependency mediation programs.

Project # 1 Community Improvement Councils to Improve Court Timeliness, Permanency, and Hearing Quality

Briefly describe the project and indicate the approximate date the CIP began working on it.

- 1. **Identify and assess needs.** Think about why you decided to focus on this issue. What is the need you were trying to address? What are the outcomes you were hoping to achieve? What evidence (e.g., data) did you have of the need for improvement?*

Initially, the Community Improvement Councils (CICs) were created after the Nevada Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) and the resultant Program Improvement Plan (PIP) identified that Nevada needed to improve its time to permanency particularly in the areas of adoption and termination of parental rights (TPR). The PIP outlined several Systemic Factors to be addressed during the PIP implementation period. Specifically, Primary Strategy (3) "Improve the Timeliness and Appropriateness of Permanency Planning across the Life of the Case" and goal #1 under that strategy "Reduce the number of children in out of home care for 18 months or

longer and reduce barrier to adoption and TPR.” The creation of CICs helped address this area of needed improvement.

In October 2010, Justice Nancy Saitta, Chair of the CIP Select Committee, requested that each lead district court dependency judge create a workgroup or Community Improvement Council (CIC) of local stakeholders to identify barriers to timely permanency, adoption, and TPR and develop and implement solutions to these barriers (Appendix 1).

The expectation was that time to permanency and TPR would decrease with state-level support of the CICs concerted efforts to systemically improve court processing of abuse and neglect cases (Nevada Revised Statutes 432B cases) by implementing evidence-based best practices and continually assessing and improving their execution.

2. ***Develop theory of change.*** *Do you have a theory about the causes of the problem? What is your "theory of change" (how do you think your activities/interventions will improve the outcomes)?*

In Nevada, nearly 40 judges and masters have jurisdiction to hear child protection cases in 11 judicial districts and 17 counties across urban and rural jurisdictions, diverse legal cultures and political climates. In the 9 rural districts the judges hear all types of cases: criminal, civil, divorce, juvenile delinquency, and child welfare. Although the dependency courts were aware of the ASFA timeliness mandates and corresponding Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) requirements; most were completely unaware of their compliance rates.

The theory is that if the judiciary and their CICs were provided data to help them identify areas needing improvement and information about evidence-based and best practices, with support and guidance, they would rise to the challenge and make systemic changes to improve timeliness. Because each judicial district is unique, the specific local activities and interventions for that district were built on a foundation of empirical data and consensus among the key stakeholders and constituency of that district.

3. ***Develop/select solution.*** *How did you select your activities/interventions (e.g., evidence-based, empirically supported, best-practices, etc.¹).*

The courts and their CICs were informed of their data metrics and how to interpret the data and evidence-based best practices that had demonstrated improvement in specific areas. The CICs agreed on the areas in need of improvement and, using expert advice and guidance, selected the interventions that best fit their local circumstances and needs.

¹ Definitions for evidence-based, empirically-supported and best-practices are available in the appendix.

4. *Describe the implementation of the project. What did the CIP do to implement the project? What did others (e.g. judges, attorneys) do? Did you do anything to ensure fidelity of the implementation (that is, anything to ensure the program was implemented as it was supposed to be)?*

Following receipt of Justice Saitta's letter (October 2010) requesting the formation of a CIC in each judicial district, every lead district court judge in the state created a CIC under the guidance and with the support of Nevada CIP (Appendix 2).

CIP produces quarterly and annual data packets containing court timeliness, child welfare, and trend metrics (Appendix 3). The timeliness data metrics distributed to the CICs quarterly allow for comparison over time as well as comparison among judicial districts. Recently the court performance measures quarterly report was modified to include a comparison of the median days to permanency per year for each judicial district and the proportion of children for whom the first permanency hearing falls within the mandatory requirements. This enables the courts to quickly assess their progress in improving timeliness.

Data are used by the CICs to assess the impact of interventions on areas targeted for improvement in their action plans. The CICs utilize the quarterly and annual data packets, and information on targeted evidence-based and best practices provided at the annual CIC Summit (Appendix 4) to create logic models designed to improve some aspect of court functioning identified at the local level as in need of improvement.

These data are also used to guide CIP's discussions with the judiciary and their CICs so local stakeholders can work to improve timeliness and resolve systemic problems. CIP attends most local CIC meetings (Appendix 5), reaching out to each CIC to help them identify evidence-based and best practices that may be applicable in their jurisdictions, technical assistance to move forward on planning their implementation, and other brainstorming support. The Coordinator is also able to note similar areas of difficulty or success across the State to address. CIP writes and distributes a quarterly newsletter to all CIC members updating on action plan and program implementation and CQI status throughout the state (Appendix 6).

CIP has contracted with the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) to assist the CICs with data interpretation and analysis. As a result, all 11 local CICs are working on improving court hearing processes and quality, and have been doing so since 2011.

Initially each judicial district developed an action plan to identify barriers to permanency, timely adoptions, and termination of parental rights; and solutions to resolve these barriers in their districts. With help from the NCJFCJ, CIP conducts targeted annual convenings of stakeholder teams from each of the judicial districts. Prior to the last two annual Summits, judicial roundtables (Appendix 7) have been facilitated by Nevada Supreme Court Justice Nancy Saitta and a judicial facilitator during which the judicial officers share and discuss their issues of concern.

During the annual CIC Summits each of the judicial district's CICs are provided with their local timeliness performance measures from UNITY (Unified Nevada Information Technology for Youth, the Nevada SACWIS or State Automated Child Welfare Information System) and child welfare information from the Chapin Hall web tool. Guidance is provided by NCJFCJ to help the CICs begin assessing where their systems' timeliness measures compare to federal mandates and to the State as a whole. Training the judges and key stakeholders on performance measurement, helping them to think about their goals, and how and what to measure has been CIP's strategy to advance a CQI mindset throughout the State. NCJFCJ was contracted to develop and present "A Guide to Integrating Continuous Quality Improvement into the Work of the Community Improvement Councils" at the 2015 CIC Summit (Appendix 8). This Guide offers practical suggestions for steps to fully integrate CQI into planning and action within the CIC.

Using their local data to inform the process, the CICs each created two action plans (around timeliness and child safety decision-making) during the CIC Summits in September 2012 and 2013. The 2014 and 2015 Annual CIC Summits focused on timeliness to permanency and the principles of quality hearings and specific evidence-based strategies to improve hearing quality, and concluded with development of action plans to improve court timeliness and hearing quality.

To ensure fidelity of implementation, the CICs have been guided by CIP as they developed and grew. The integrated and ongoing collection and provision of information (data that is available and covering an extensive range of measures and potential evidence-based strategies for improvement), combined with efforts to address challenges as they arise has a solid foundation in Nevada's CICs and is the focus of Nevada CIP. As a matter of fact, the CICs have proven to be so effective that CIP used the CIC action plans upon which to build CIP's Strategic and Funding Plan and updates.

- 5. Describe any monitoring/evaluations/assessments of your project and how you intend to apply the findings. How are you monitoring implementation and changes? What data collection tools/methods did you (will you) use to assess effectiveness? What evidence is there that the activities/interventions were effective? What evidence is there that the activities / interventions were implemented with fidelity? Describe how evaluation/assessments were used to inform the project. Does the intervention need to be adjusted, stopped? Does the problem still exist? Was your theory of change supported?*

The CICs are asked to report on implementation status and processing changes annually. Many also review progress during their local CIC meetings. During the year the CIP Coordinator participates in these CIC meetings to monitor implementation, help interpret quarterly data reports to assess impact, and guide implementation changes that may be necessary. Nevada CIP contracts with NCJFCJ to provide technical assistance related to CQI of current statewide and local court improvement projects. NCJFCJ also conducts satisfaction, process, and impact evaluations on the best practices implemented by the courts. Recommendations for program improvement are, then, implemented.

The data used to assess reduction in time to permanency and TPR are court timeliness and child welfare data from UNITY and Chapin Hall. The most recent CFPSR data profile provided on June 23, 2015 indicates that Exits to Adoption in less than 24 months is trending positively reflecting that improvement has occurred in timeliness of adoptions. A full 30% of those exiting to adoption are in less than 24 months. The national median is 26.8%, and the 75th percentile is 36.6%. The data also indicate that children are now exiting to adoption in 29.0 months. The national median is 32.4 months and the 25th percentile is 27.3 months (see chart below).

TIMELINESS OF ADOPTIONS DISCHARGED FROM FOSTER CARE	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
Exits to Adoption in less than 24 Months (national median 26.8%, 75th percentile = 36.6%)	14.6%	18.1%	25.0%	27.8%	30.0%
Exits to Adoption, median length of stay(national median 32.4 months, 25th percentile = 27.3 months)	Median= 36.3 months	Median= 35.4 months	Median= 30.7 months	Median= 29.0 months	Median= 29.0 months

Source: Nevada CFSP-SFY 2015-2019, page 54, 6/23/2015 Data Profile

The fact that all the statistical measures are trending in the directions of improvement since 2010 or 2011 suggests that a systemic change is taking place in Nevada. Thirty percent (30%) of the exits to adoption are taking place in less than 24 months as compared to only 14.6% in 2010. Exits to adoption are taking 29 months compared to 36.3 months in 2010. The time to permanent placement has decreased 214 days or 25.2% between 2011 and the 3rd quarter of 2015 (from 848 median days to 634 median days), and the time to TRP has decreased 150 days or 20% (see page 33).

As the CICs identify additional areas of improvement (e.g., hearing quality) additional and different data will need to be collected and provided.

6. *Is this project a priority for you in 2016?* Yes No

7. *Would you like a CQI consult around this project?* Yes No

Project # 2 Juvenile Dependency Mediation

Briefly describe the project and indicate the approximate date the CIP began working on it.

1. **Identify and assess needs.** *Think about why you decided to focus on this issue. What is the need you were trying to address? What are the outcomes you were hoping to achieve? What evidence (e.g., data) did you have of the need for improvement?*

Dependency Mediation was initially identified in the 2nd Judicial District's (JD) CIC action plan as a means to improve timeliness to permanency and TPR by improving case processing and parental engagement. This need was identified during the Round Two CFSR and resulting PIP.

CIP first funded the program in Washoe County in 2011. Research indicates that programs implemented in a manner consistent with national and state guidelines can be expected to offer an improvement over traditional child welfare proceedings. Evaluations of mediation programs find that mediations tend to result in full or partial agreement in at least 70% of cases. Of course, simply producing agreements is not the only goal of mediation. There is substantial support across a wide variety of studies that mediation allows parents and other participants an opportunity to talk and discuss the issues they believe are necessary for the family's success. The ability to be heard has been a consistent theme in the 2nd JD's program's exit surveys which provide quantitative and qualitative data on non-professional (parents, foster parents, etc.) and professional participant's response to mediation.

The initial outcomes expected for the program in the 2nd JD included mediating at least 30 cases, 70% of which would come to some sort of agreement (full or partial). The average time from petition to permanency would be 18 months or less and 80% of the mediated cases that came to agreement would come to a permanency outcome.

2. **Develop theory of change.** *Do you have a theory about the causes of the problem? What is your "theory of change" (how do you think your activities/interventions will improve the outcomes)?*

Some of the lack of timeliness to permanency and TPR could be due to the fact that parents may not be engaged in working their case plans. Research has demonstrated that not only is mediation successful in producing agreement across a wide range of case types, but it also provides an atmosphere in which all parties feel heard. When parties are heard they are likely to become more engaged in the case with an increased likelihood of positive outcomes. Additionally, research has shown that time from petition to permanency is less for mediated cases when compared to a control group of cases not mediated.

Mediation is used to improve the quality of the dependency process by providing the parties an opportunity to enter into a discussion in which the parties voluntarily resolve the issues that

brought the family into the dependency system and produce a written agreement in lieu of a potentially traumatic contested hearing. Mediations tend to focus on the family's strengths. Benefits of mediation in child dependency cases include: time savings, efficiency, parental engagement, and improved outcomes for children.

3. ***Develop/select solution.*** *How did you select your activities/interventions (e.g., evidence-based, empirically supported, best-practices, etc.).*

Dependency mediation was selected by the CICs as an intervention to ameliorate timeliness issues. Following extensive research to verify that mediation was an appropriate intervention; CIP agreed that this was indeed a viable, evidence-based best practice to improve the processing and timeliness of dependency cases.

4. ***Describe the implementation of the project.*** *What did the CIP do to implement the project? What did others (e.g. judges, attorneys) do? Did you do anything to ensure fidelity of the implementation (that is, anything to ensure the program was implemented as it was supposed to be)?*

CIP worked with the 2nd JD's mediation program director and the judiciary to design program guidelines, and protocols that could be eventually implemented statewide. CIP has helped start mediation programs in the 2nd, 5th, and 8th JDs. The 2nd and the 5th JDs have sustained their mediation programs. The 8th JD's program has been put on hold while the court is focusing on implementing child safety decision-making and the Blue Ribbon for Kids Commission recommendations. However, mediation expanded into the western, rural judicial districts (the 3rd, 6th, 10th, and 11th JDs) and the Washoe Tribe. The 1st JD is using its Family Mediation Services to mediate dependency cases as well. The 4th, 7th, and 9th JDs all plan to begin new programs. The 8th JD plans to restart their program within the Family Mediation Center in Clark County.

In all cases the judiciary and its CICs have been actively involved in determining how mediation will function within their districts. The program design included allowing referral to mediation at any stage during the legal process. It included collecting participation and outcome data with data collection tools designed by NCJFCJ.

As part of the CIP continual quality improvement efforts and to ensure fidelity of implementation, the NCJFCJ was contracted to design stakeholder surveys and conduct process and satisfaction assessments of the 2nd, 5th, and 8th JD's mediation programs. NCJFCJ also conducted an impact assessment of the 2nd JD's program because it had been in place long enough for cases to have closed.

Because the entire state wishes to implement mediation into its dependency case processing; the need for trained and qualified dependency mediators has become apparent. CIP is working with the 2nd JD's mediator director and lead dependency mediator to develop a 40 hour training curriculum. CIP will contract with this mediator, who has conducted 40 hour mediation

certification trainings at University of Nevada Reno, to conduct this training. Each JD will be invited to send two potential mediators to be trained. The training is planned for March 7-11, 2016.

- a. If the project has not yet been implemented, please briefly describe your intentions/plans for implementation.*
- 5. Describe any monitoring/evaluations/assessments of your project and how you intend to apply the findings. How are you monitoring implementation and changes? What data collection tools/methods did you (will you) use to assess effectiveness? What evidence is there that the activities/interventions were effective? What evidence is there that the activities/interventions were implemented with fidelity? Describe how evaluation / assessments were used to inform the project. Does the intervention need to be adjusted, stopped? Does the problem still exist? Was your theory of change supported?**

The NCJFCJ's key findings from their process and satisfaction assessment of the mediation program in the 2nd JD indicate that there is a general perception that mediation is successful. Stakeholders agreed that mediation lessened their workload in preparation and hearings, and is a good alternative to court. The majority of the mediations (78%) resulted in agreement, and parents felt heard, respected, and treated fairly. Mediated cases had fewer default orders in the 2nd JD. Key findings from the 2nd JD's impact assessment indicate that mediated cases are more likely to result in reunification of the children with their families when compared to non-mediated cases. Among mediated cases that had closed, 88% have resulted in reunification. Among the non-mediated closed cases, only 50% resulted in reunification. Findings show that fathers who participated in mediation were more engaged and were present at more hearings compared to fathers who did not participate in mediation. Fathers who participated in mediation attended 72% of all hearings, while those who did not participate in mediation only attended 50% of their hearings (Appendix 9).

The dependency mediation program in the 8th JD launched in early 2013 and only had completed 10 mediations at the time the assessment began. Consequently, this assessment conducted by the NCJFCJ only included process and satisfaction evaluations. It was too early to be able to assess the program's impact. As in the 2nd JD, there is a general perception in the 8th JD that mediation is successful and that parents feel heard, respected, and treated fairly during the process. The majority (84%) of the mediations have resulted in agreement. Most stakeholders feel that mediation is successful in increasing cooperation among parties and in engaging parents (Appendix 10).

The NCJFCJ completed a process evaluation of dependency mediation in the 5th JD. The results of the process evaluation demonstrate that the dependency mediation program in the 5th JD has had a successful start. Although only 5 mediations have been held, all five have resolved with agreements. There is a general perception from both parents and stakeholders that mediation is a helpful tool in moving their case forward. Parents felt that they were listened to, their opinions were respected, and that they were part of the decision-making process. The stakeholders found mediation to be an effective tool to increase parental engagement and provide an alternative to litigation while not increasing their workload (Appendix 11).

All programs assessed took action to implement recommendations offered by NCJFCJ. For example, the 2nd JD's mediation program took the NCJFCJ's recommendations to the CIC to brainstorm how best to implement, included the recommendations in their annual goals, and systematically implemented the recommendations outlined below (Appendix 12):

Recommendations for Improving Process & Next Steps for 2nd JD's Dependency Mediation Program

1. *Ensure All Parties Understand the Agreement.* Satisfaction surveys revealed that the parties involved did not always have the same perception of the level of agreement that was reached. It is important that *all* persons understand whether full agreement was reached. In particular, this is important for parents, to ensure that they know what occurred at the mediation and what the next steps are in the case.
2. *Ongoing Education & Outreach.* Education and outreach should not stop with implementation. Continuing education and outreach efforts will ensure that new stakeholders are familiar with the program. One potential outlet in Washoe for this continued education may be the Model Court collaborative meetings that occur monthly.
3. *Consistent Domestic Violence Screening & Treatment.* There did not seem to be consistency among mediators as to how the cases were screened, or how they treated cases when domestic violence did occur. At a minimum, all cases should be screened using a standard tool (across mediators), where parents are directly asked.
4. *Decrease No-Show Rate.* If parents do not show up for mediation, the mediation cannot occur. Consider making mediation information available (such as the mediation brochure) to parents when they are at court hearings.
5. *Identify Areas for Improved Efficiency.* A few stakeholders mentioned that mediation is too lengthy. System participants should consider what other efficiency strategies may help with this process.
6. *Share Results.* A summary of the mediation reports might be useful to share with system stakeholders in order to increase buy-in and to demonstrate the positive results of mediation. At a minimum, identifying the number of the mediations held, the agreement rate, and the percentage of time mediation results in vacated hearings would be interesting to stakeholders and could help with outreach and buy-in of other stakeholders in the process.

The problems the mediation programs were expected to help resolve are decreasing in severity as outlined in the section above. However, since the courts are trying a multitude of interventions, a direct correlation cannot be made between the mediation programs and improved timeliness. However, it does appear that mediation does improve parental engagement and increases the likelihood of family reunification. Additionally, the program's praises are being sung by the judiciary as exemplified in the 2nd JD's final mediation program report for 2014, reflecting on the Dependency Mediation Program in the 2nd Judicial District, Judge Egan Walker observes:

“In cases where the dependency process results in termination of parental rights, mediation is likely one of the few humane processes which we can offer parents. In the great majority of cases which remain, mediation is reaping benefits through earlier participation of parents and the tantalizing possibility that mediation will be a significant tool with which to accelerate the safe and effective reunification of families. The Dependency Mediation Program is a great example of how a modest investment of dollars early can reap untold rewards in positive outcomes later.”

The theory of change has, thus far, been supported in terms of high participant satisfaction, and increased parental engagement and reunification.

a. If the project has not yet been evaluated/assessed, please briefly describe your intentions/plans for evaluation/assessment.

6. *Is this project a priority for you in 2016?* Yes No

7. *Would you like a CQI consult around this project?* Yes No

II. Trainings, Projects, and Activities

For questions 1-9, provide a **concise** description of work completed or underway in FY 2015 (October 2014-September 2015) in the below topical subcategories. For question 1, focus on significant training events or initiatives held or developed in FY 2015 and answer the corresponding questions.

For questions 2-9, indicate (yes/no) if you worked on a project or activity in this area. If the answer is yes, that you conducted a project or activity in the area, please complete the table. If the answer is no, skip to the next question. For each project/activity, please provide a brief description, categorize the project by selecting one of the sub-categories available in the drop down box (e.g., for quality hearings, the sub-categories include court observation/assessment, process improvements, specialty/pilot courts, court orders/title IV-E, mediation, appeals, other) and identify the stage of your work by selecting the appropriate state from the drop down box (identifying and assessing needs, developing a theory of change, selecting a solution, implementing your project, or assessing/evaluating your work)².

Questions 2-9 ask you to describe the purpose of the project or activity and how the project or activity will contribute to continuous quality improvement (CQI) in the identified area. Please use the “other” categories to include specific projects that are important to you but do not necessarily fit as part of the CQI process. **If you have a project/activity that fits into multiple categories (e.g., youth engagement and well-being), please choose the category you think fits it best and only report the project once.**

1. Trainings

<i>Topical Area</i>	<i>Did you hold or develop a training on this topic?</i>	<i>Who was the target audience?</i>	<i>What were the intended training outcomes?</i>	<i>How did you evaluate this training?</i>
Data	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Courts/stakeholders/ Community Improvement Councils	Identification of areas in need of improvement and development of action plan to improve timeliness, permanency, and hearing quality for upcoming year	Action plans and survey
Hearing quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Courts/stakeholders/ Community Improvement	Identification of specific strategies and best practices to	Action plans and survey

² A description of each stage of work is available in an appendix to this document.

		Councils	improve court processing and development of action plan to improve hearing quality for upcoming year	
Improving timeliness/permanency	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Courts/stakeholders/Community Improvement Councils	Development of action plan to improve timeliness, permanency, and hearing quality for upcoming year	Action plans and survey
Quality legal representation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Children's and parents' attorneys in 432B (child abuse and neglect) cases	Improve attorney understanding of NRS432B and federal acts relating to child abuse and neglect	Successful completion of on-line training which includes testing.
Engagement & participation of parties	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Courts/stakeholders/Community Improvement Councils	Development of action plan to improve timeliness, permanency, and hearing quality for upcoming year	Action plans and survey
Well-being	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Courts/stakeholders/Community Improvement Councils		Action plans and survey
ICWA	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No			
Sex Trafficking	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No			
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			

2. Data Projects. *Data projects include any work with administrative data sets (e.g., AFCARS, SACWIS), data dashboards, data reports, fostering court improvement data, case management systems, and data sharing efforts.*

Do you have a data project/activity? Yes No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Court event notification: The purpose of this project is to ensure that all parties in a case are properly and consistently notified of hearings. Once the data exchange is implemented in Clark County, significant portions of the technical architecture can be utilized in Washoe	Agency Data Sharing Efforts	Selecting Solution

<p>County, and ultimately statewide. Not only will Clark County's information sharing accomplish more efficient, more accurate notice, it will establish an environment of data-sharing and help build the foundation for a more sophisticated data exchange statewide.</p> <p>The unit and integration testing have been completed and user acceptance testing is proceeding. Go-live is planned for February or March 2016.</p>		
<p>Centralized Case Index (CCI): The purpose this project is to provide the judiciary with aggregate data reports into which they may drill down to obtain case specific information helping them manage their caseloads and improve timely processing of dependency cases.</p> <p>The pilot is taking place in Washoe County to replace their old ASFA tracking system. The CCI will receive updated case hearing and event information directly from the 2nd Judicial District court case management system.</p> <p>In Clark County, case information will be first transmitted from the Clark County Family Court to UNITY using the Court Event Notification data exchange discussed above. The court case information to the CCI will be passed to the CCI from UNITY.</p> <p>To date two proof of concepts have been designed which proved that (1) case and case party information from multiple sources can be combined into a single data store and provide a consolidated view of case information; (2) timeliness reports can be generated on-demand through a browser based system and presented to the user in an easily understandable format.</p> <p>CIP has moved these capabilities into a fully productionalized system, the Centralized Case Index, which will enable near real-time timeliness reporting through an integrated dashboard. DCFS is moving the software that will handle the extraction from UNITY into the integration testing in early January 2016 and AOC is in the final stages of installing the necessary Application Server on the CCI system.</p>	<p>Data dashboards</p>	<p>Selecting Solution</p>
	<p>Choose an item.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>

Do you have **data reports** that you consistently view? Yes No

If **Yes**, around which topics?

- Hearing quality Timeliness Permanency Well-being Education Engagement of youth Engagement of Parents Other Engagement Quality Legal Representation
ICWA DCST Runaway Youth Other:_____
- Other: _____

3. Hearing Quality. *Hearing quality projects include any efforts you have made to improve the quality of dependency hearings, including court observation/assessment projects, process improvements, specialty/pilot court projects, projects related to court orders or title IV-E determinations, mediation, or appeals.*

Do you have a hearing quality project/activity? Yes No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
<p>The purpose of this court observation study was to provide each court with some baseline data and a starting point from which to identify strengths and challenges in practice, and to inform action planning for ongoing systems change efforts. The initial court observation study/assessment was completed by NCJFCJ on 9 of the Judicial Districts (JDs) and the baseline results were distributed to the CICs October 2014 (Appendix 3).</p> <p>The CICs each developed action plans to improve the quality of their hearings. Each court focused on different aspects of the process for improvement dependent upon where their challenges appeared. The courts are in the process of implementing the changes they believe will improve their hearings.</p> <p>The State CIP is focusing on encouraging judges to: engage parties present by explaining the hearing process and asking if they understand, include children in the hearings, address ICWA, discuss child’s safety and why child cannot return home today, and</p>	<p>Court Observation/Assessment</p>	<p>Implementation</p>

<p>emphasize well-being in all hearings, review permanency and concurrent plans more frequently possibly by utilizing case plan summaries as a tool.</p> <p>With assistance from CIP, the CICs will, then, work on assessing the impact of their systems changes.</p>		
<p>CIP helped start mediation programs in the 2nd, 5th, and 8th JDs. It also contracted with a mediator to provide mediation services in the northwestern rural JDs and for the Washoe Tribe. The 2nd, 5th and rural JDs have sustained their mediation programs. Mediation is used to improve the quality of dependency process by providing the parties an opportunity to enter into a discussion in which the parties voluntarily resolve the issues that brought the family into the dependency system and produce a written agreement in lieu of a potentially traumatic contested hearing. Evaluation and assessment has taken place and programs are implementing changes recommended in the evaluations.</p>	Mediation	Evaluation/Assessment
<p>A statewide collaborative worked with the National Center for State Courts to develop dependency court order templates to ensure that requisite state and federal language is included in court orders. The templates were subject to review by judges, attorneys, child welfare administrators, and other stakeholders throughout the state. The collaborative decided to provide two versions of each template: one version is for cases where the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) is applicable, and the other version is for cases where ICWA is not applicable. Note however, that there is only one version of the template for Protective Custody hearings. The templates have been distributed to all dependency court judges, district</p>	Courts Orders/Title IV-E	Implementation

<p>attorneys, and child welfare agency managers.</p> <p>Although their use is not mandatory; the court order templates have been greeted with enthusiasm and are in the process of being implemented. The intention is to improve the quality of dependency court orders and respond to the Nevada IV-E Corrective Action Plan by ensuring inclusion of appropriate language for judicial determinations regarding contrary to the welfare of the child, reasonable efforts to prevent removal, and reasonable efforts to finalize the permanency plan. It is expected that these templates will ultimately improve the quality of court hearings.</p> <p>Hearing quality was assessed prior to the release of the finalized templates and Nevada intends to conduct another hearing quality assessment in a few years after courts have had an opportunity to implement hearing improvement actions including the templates. Future IV-E reviews will also assess the impact the templates have on the appropriate language in judicial findings.</p>		
<p>In October 2014 Nevada Supreme Court Justice Nancy M. Saitta convened a Blue Ribbon for Kids (BRK) Commission to identify lasting solutions for issues in the Clark County child welfare system to ensure that the welfare of the children under its charge is its highest priority. The BRK Commission’s final report with 7 recommendations was presented in March 2015.</p> <p>This report is the first step in an ongoing strategic planning and reform process that will provide a comprehensive and sustainable strategy for realizing the goal of a child-centered, self-improving, and sustainable child welfare system to</p>	Other	Selecting Solution

<p>support the most vulnerable children and families.</p> <p>The recommendations include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I. Improve Reasonable Efforts and Child Safety and Removal Decision-Making</i> <i>II. Reform of the Child Welfare Agency Process</i> <i>III. Reform of the Court Process</i> <i>IV. Ensure Meaningful Representation and Voice in the Process from the Initiation of Proceedings</i> <i>V. Selection, Retention, Training, and Ongoing Professional Development for all Stakeholders</i> <i>VI. Improve Public Education about the System</i> <i>VII. Collaboration for Systemic Overarching Reform</i> <p>In the second phase of the Commission’s work, the recommendations and implementation strategies have been used as a road map for stakeholders to work together to make each one a reality. Under the guidance of the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Justice Programs Diagnostic Center, workgroups and committees have been convened to engage in strategic action planning for each recommendation’s implementation.</p> <p>While these recommendations were developed for Clark County, the Commission considered data from the entire state and national-level research about evidence-based best practices in dependency. This means that some, or all, of the recommendations may be applicable and transferable to other jurisdictions throughout the State.</p> <p>For example, a subcommittee under the “Reform of the Court Process” subgroup</p>		
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<p>is studying the development of statewide child dependency rules of child dependency procedure. It is expected that this subcommittee will address priority issues of motion practice and discovery to create an effective system that is uniform, predictable, and timely.</p>		
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4. Improving Timeliness of Hearings or Permanency Outcomes. *Timeliness and permanency projects include any activities or projects meant to improve the timeliness of case processing or achievement of timely permanency. This could include general timeliness; focus on continuances or appeals, working on permanency goals other than APPLA, or focus on APPLA and older youth.*

Do you have a Timeliness or permanency project/activity? Yes No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
<p>In response to the Child and Family Services Review, the courts were asked to identify solutions to overcome barriers to timely permanency, adoption, and termination of parental rights. In November 2010, the Nevada Supreme Court asked each judicial district in the State to convene a Community Improvement Council (CIC) composed of locally selected key stakeholders and other system partners. The initial goal of the CICs included considering the functioning and efficiency of the permanency timeframes by identifying and assessing the challenges and possible solutions specific to the jurisdiction.</p> <p>Every court created a CIC and each CIC has been meeting for the last five years concentrating on improving the timely processing of dependency cases. Some CICs have been more active or more focused than others, but the combined impact of these workgroups has been noticeable and appreciable. The impact of this work has been assessed annually, but in this 5th year CIP looked at trends. Time to permanency and termination of parental rights has been consistently trending downward (32.9% and 17.9%, respectively) and the proportion of permanency hearings meeting statutory</p>	<p>General/ASFA</p>	<p>Evaluation/Assessment</p>

requirement upward (23.2% increase).		
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5. Quality of Legal Representation. *Quality of legal representation projects may include any activities/efforts related to improvement of representation for parents, youth, or the agency. This might include assessments or analyzing current practice, implementing new practice models, working with law school clinics, or other activities in this area.*

Do you have a quality legal representation project/activity? Yes No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada Children’s Attorneys Project provides counsel, advice, and representation to 3000 of Clark County’s 3400 neglected and abused children in its child welfare system. Since 1999, the fundamental goal of the Project has been to provide a voice in court for neglected and abused children. One of the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon for Kids Commission was to assess the project. The NCJFCJ has been contracted to conduct an assessment and the research design is being discussed to account for the fact that a viable control group is not achievable.	Assessment	Selecting Solution

6. Engagement & Participation of Parties. *Engagement and participation of parties includes any efforts centered around youth, parent, foster family, or caregiver engagement, as well as projects related to notice to relatives, limited English proficiency, or other efforts to increase presence and engagement at the hearing.*

Do you have an engagement or participation of parties project/activity? Yes No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
	Choose an item.	Choose an item.

7. Well-Being. *Well-being projects include any efforts related to improving the well-being of youth. Projects could focus on education, early childhood development, psychotropic medication, LGBTQ youth, trauma, racial disproportionality/disparity, immigration, or other well-being related topics.*

Do you have any projects/activities focused on well-being? Yes No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
The Nevada Education, Child Welfare and the Courts	Education	Implementation

Collaborative (Nevada’s Department of Education (NDOE), Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS), Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), Washoe County Department of Social Services (WCDSS)) chaired by CIP has the mission to improve school placement stability and continuity of instruction, specifically reducing the number of school moves and ensuring that if a move is necessary that the transition is eased by making certain that the child’s records are readily available to the new school and that the new school is aware that the child is in foster care.

This requires information be shared among the child welfare agency, the school district, and the court. To that end, in 2013 the Nevada Legislature enacted Senate Bill 31 (SB 31), which defined children in the legal custody of a child welfare agency as being awaiting foster care placement per the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act unless the child is legally adopted or ordered by the court to a permanent placement.

The NDOE and the DCFS wrote and distributed a joint letter to all school superintendents, school staff, and child welfare administrators, managers, and supervisors instructing all parties to immediately implement the Uninterrupted Scholars Act. It specifically identified who has a right to access the child’s educational records, how they access the records, and how the child welfare agency proves that it has custody of the student.

This Statewide Collaborative is also responsible for a pilot project to ensure that foster children are identified quickly by the school district and afforded appropriate services. The Washoe County Department of Social Services (WCDSS) and the Washoe County School District have initiated a Pilot Electronic Information sharing plan in which all related fields in the school district’s case management system (CMS), Infinite Campus, will populate from UNITY nightly. Infinite Campus has been modified and UNITY expects to be able to push data by January 2016.

This means, among others things, that schools will have updated information about foster children,

including the fact that these students are in foster care, nightly.		
Because all school districts and NDOE will be using Infinite Campus within several years, this capacity will also be statewide. Clark County School District is in the process of implementing Infinite Campus. It takes 3-5 years for a school district to fully implement this new CMS.		
The expectation is that this will improve educational stability and continuity of instruction for foster children.		

8. ICWA. *ICWA projects could include any efforts to enhance state and tribal collaboration, state and tribal court agreements, data collection and analysis of ICWA compliance, or ICWA notice projects.*

Do you have any projects/activities focused on ICWA? Yes No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Court order templates described above that included templates specifically for cases involving ICWA were developed in collaboration with tribal representatives.	Tribal Collaboration	Implementation

9. Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (PSTFSA). *PSTFSA projects could include any work around domestic child sex trafficking, the reasonable and prudent parent standard, a focus on runaway youth, focus on normalcy, collaboration with other agencies around this topic, data collection and analysis, data sharing, or other efforts to fully implement the act into practice.*

Do you have any projects/activities focused on PSTSFA? Yes No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Developing a statewide commission to prevent CSEC	Sex Trafficking	Identifying/Assessing Needs
Creating a statewide data collecting and sharing process	Data collection/assessment/analysis	Identifying/Assessing Needs
Judicial CSEC training	Other	Identifying/Assessing Needs

III. Priority Areas & CIP Resources

a. What would you consider your top **two** priority areas for FY 2016?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Data projects | <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing quality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Timeliness/permanency | <input type="checkbox"/> Quality of legal representation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement of Parties | <input type="checkbox"/> Well-being |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Preventing Sex Trafficking & Strengthening Families | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ICWA | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: |

Support judicial CICs in their efforts to improve their timeliness to permanency, child safety decision-making, timely hearing quality including timely appointment of quality legal representation and engagement of parties, and well-being in the areas of trauma-informed practices and education.

b. Are there any outside driving forces that determine your priorities or consume a lot of your time? (For example, legislative involvement or directives, budget concerns, consent decrees and class action litigation, highly publicized child fatalities, unaccompanied minors, etc.)

These are no outside driving forces determining CIP priorities.

IV. CIP Collaboration and Participation in Child Welfare Program Planning and Improvement Efforts

10. For FY2014, you described how the CIP planned to assist with and participate in round three of the CFSR and program improvement process. We are interested in your progress or any changes to this plan.

- a. Has your plan changed? If so, how?
- b. How have you moved this plan forward in FY2015?
- c. What barriers have you encountered (if any) in increasing your participation with round three of CFSR?
- d. Have you received any technical assistance on this issue? If so, what was it and how was it helpful to you?

The plan developed to assist Nevada Child Welfare Agencies with, and participate in, round three of the CFSR and program improved process has been successfully implemented and remains on course. DCFS includes CIP in its CFSR efforts including the in person Federal briefing in Seattle.

CIP is a charter team member of the DCFS SQIC. The SQIC's purpose is to promote positive outcomes for Nevada's children through continuous oversight and analysis of state and federally identified performance measures and data relevant to continuous quality improvement.

As an active member of the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee (SQIC) which meets monthly to discuss all that is relevant to both the CFSR and the CFSP, CIP provides a standing report on relevant court measure data. CIP is also actively involved in the SQIC Data Sub-Group which also meets monthly and is part of continual quality improvement and the CFSP/CFSR process to ensure data quality.

CIP is part of the team reviewing all the CFSR Case Review reports from the jurisdictions. CIP participates in on-going review of the resultant data and discussion concerning how improvements can be made in those items leading up to Nevada's Round 3 CFSR in 2018. The CIP Coordinator will be trained to assist with the CFSR in Nevada and has been provided access to the CFSR On-Line Monitoring System. The Coordinator was trained on the proper rating of the items and participated in the Rural Region Review in late February 2015 and will again in April 2016 (Appendix 13).

The 11 judicially convened Community Improvement Councils (CICs) will be involved in either focus groups or surveys relating to continuous monitoring of some of the outcomes and the systemic factors. As a matter of fact, the CICs have initiated supporting several of the outcomes and systemic factors as a result of their action planning around timeliness, child safety, and hearing quality. All the courts have focused on implementing child safety decision making (Safety Outcome 2, Item 3). Most courts are asking about placement with relatives and maintaining relationships, if not placement with, siblings (Permanency Outcome 2, Items 7, 8, and 10). As result of the 2014 CIC Summit training on implementing the Enhanced Resource Guidelines' Bench cards, the courts are making inquiries concerning appropriate permanency goals (Permanency Outcome 1, Item 5).

Regarding the Case Review System systemic factor Item 22, CIP has added a column for the proportion of permanency hearings meeting the mandatory time requirement to the Court Performance Measure report sent to the courts quarterly. A review of court timeliness data shows that for all children who were in foster care between 2012 and the 3rd quarter of 2015, the median days to permanency hearing were within the 12 month requirement. The proportion of permanency hearings conducted timely improved from 67% in 2012 to 78% in 3rd quarter 2015.

In terms of Item 23 (Termination of Parental Rights), CIP has been informing the courts quarterly of their timeliness using the same Court Performance Measure report and during the annual CIC Summit annual and trend data are presented for the courts to work on improvement. A review of these data reveals that since 2011 the time to TPR has been reduced by 20% statewide from 764 to 614 median days.

Data regarding Item 21 (Periodic Reviews) is being added to the quarterly court performance measures report to ensure that the courts focus their attention on this important measure, as well.

Several courts have included in their CIC action plans activities to assist with Item 35 (Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention). The 6th Judicial District (JD) signed an MOU with DCFS to train court staff to recruit, train, and support foster and adoptive families. The 7th JD included in their quality hearing action plan increasing court involvement in foster care recruitment. The 10th JD charged each of its CIC members to approach at least one suitable family about fostering children.

The Nevada court system and CIP partners with child welfare on a variety of fronts as the need arises. The CICs all include their child welfare partners in developing and implementing their action plans to address local issues. CIP experiences no barriers to CFSR participation, as a matter of fact, DCFS actively solicits CIP input. No technical assistance has been offered to date.

11. For FY2014 you described how the CIP will assist with and participate in the CFSP/APSR processes with the child welfare agency in an ongoing fashion. We are interested in your progress or any changes to this plan.

- a. Has your plan changed? If so, how?
- b. How have you moved this plan forward in FY2015?
- c. What barriers have you encountered (if any) to working with the child welfare agency in the CFSP/APSR process in an ongoing fashion?
- d. Have you received any technical assistance on this issue? If so, what was it and how was it helpful to you?

CIP's plan to assist with and participate in the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) and Annual Progress Services Report (APSR) process has not changed. CIP is a collaborative partner who is engaged in development of the APSR and the CFSP. This engagement enables DCFS to include CIP's and the courts' suggestions for the goals and measurable objectives of the CFSP, and CIP provides input into the APSR regarding progress on accomplishing the various court/CIC related objectives. DCFS's engagement and consultation with CIP and the CICs has been extensive as is evidenced by the extensive representation of a statewide court perspective in the CFSP and the 2015 annual APSR.

To increase child well-being the courts are focusing on increasing the proportion of ASFA hearings during which the child's education is addressed. To assist DCFS with identifying the strengths and needs of the CPS delivery system CIP is developing a Centralized Case Index system which will be piloted in Washoe County and expanded throughout the entire State. As mentioned above, the courts have been working on achieving timely permanency since 2010 by focusing on tracking their timeliness measures, identifying areas in need of improvement, and implementing strategies to improve.

12. How are you involved, if at all, with the child welfare agency's CQI efforts?

- Contributing data Receiving data Jointly using data
- Collaborative meetings Collaborative systems change project(s)
- Other:

CIP is a charter member of the DCFS Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and its Data Subcommittee which each meet monthly. The CIP Coordinator is also an active and trained case file reviewer for DCFS.

V. CQI Current Capacity Assessment

- a. *How is the CIP progressing with CQI overall? Please provide a brief description of how you integrate CQI into your work.*

Nevada CIP integrates continual quality improvement (CQI) into all its decision-making at the state level, as well as instilling CQI into the systems change efforts by the CICs at the judicial district/local level (Appendix 14). Because Nevada CIP has limited resources, it has leveraged UNITY (Unified Nevada Information Technology for Youth the Nevada SACWIS or State Automated Child Welfare Information System) data and the AFCARS (Adoption and Foster Care Reporting System) as sources of information for most of its undertakings. Together with local qualitative and quantitative information, these data act as the foundation for state and local action planning.

For example, quarterly court timeliness and permanency data are provided at the county and judicial district level using UNITY (Appendix 3). Annually, CIP provides a data summary for each judicial district including the court timeliness indicators, permanency and outcome data, placement stability, and time in care. For 2015, the report also included trend information since Nevada had been collecting these data for 5 years (Appendix 3).

This report is provided to judges, the child welfare agencies, district attorneys, the Attorney General's Office, local CASA directors, parents' and children's counsel, and county public defenders' offices. During the CIC Summit and local CIC meetings these data are reviewed to determine next steps to be taken to improve the local systems. For example, the 2nd JD's CIC Action Plan focused on additional efforts to improve timeliness overall and particularly regarding TPR. Following are the concrete steps this CIC is taking:

- Examine and describe discovery calendars and gaps
- Identify constructing steps to expedite discovery as an ongoing process
- Examine possibility of pre-petition mediation
- Provide a case plan summary to parents.

A rural court's (6th JD) CIC Action Plan focused on improving the quality of its hearings:

- Expand and improve petitions and case plans to be rationally related
- Delete provocative language from petitions
- Findings of fact from court, rather than conclusionary language
- Increase involvement of children, family, others – develop a tool to measure success
- Improve structure of hearings – use bench cards as a roadmap, use assessment tool
- Assign hearing dates up front
- All attorneys at 72 hour hearing.

Following review of the annual report, another rural court (10th JD) requested assistance from NCJFCJ to review the raw data and correlate with the court orders to identify common or recurring issues to achieve permanency more timely. The results will be discussed at the December 2015 CIC meeting.

The CICs have all received instruction on how to utilize the “*Guide to Integrating Continuous Quality Improvement into the Work of CICs*” (Appendix 8). This Guide provides step by step direction on everything from establishing or revitalizing a CIC, to refining action plans through a CQI lens, to how to determine progress by collecting and analyzing data. It includes data collection tools which NCJFCJ (through a contract with CIP) can and will help the CICs use. All this is beautifully crafted into 6 “easy steps” with examples taken directly from the 2014 CICs’ action plans.

The intent is for the local CICs to use the child welfare and court data that is regularly provided by CIP to identify areas needing improvement, develop solutions, implement changes, and assess the impact of the changes. CIP funds process and impact assessment on many of the larger program interventions; however processing changes such as including children in the hearings or engaging parents could be assessed by the courts, themselves.

The CICs are asked to report annually on the implementation of their action plans. They need more help strategically assessing their implementation efforts to determine the strengths and weaknesses of their changes, and the gaps between the expectations and performance.

Currently CIP is working to provide the courts with a dashboard to provide them aggregate timeliness and quality reports on demand (the Centralized Case Index mentioned in Section II.2).

b. Do you have any of the following resources to help you integrate CQI into practice?

- CIP staff with CQI (e.g., data, evaluation) expertise
- Consultants with CQI expertise a University partnership
- Contracts with external agencies to assist with CQI efforts
- Other resources: _____

c. Describe the largest challenges your CIP faces with implementing CQI into your work.

The three largest overarching challenges to implementing CQI into the work effort of CIP is time, staff, and funding. CIP is challenged by the time and effort required to assess and determine if the jurisdictions have implemented the projects or practices outlined in their action plans and how interventions are working. Adequately supporting 11 judicial CICs across the entire state who are implementing a variety of initiatives is becoming a concern. CIP does contract with NCFJC for CQI assistance, but the assistance is limited to 4 site visits.

c. Please review the list of capacities below. Select the **three** capacity areas that you would like to increase your knowledge of or enhance your ability to do in the next fiscal year.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> CQI generally | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Data collection methodologies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Data analysis | <input type="checkbox"/> Understanding/applying data |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation design | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tool development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Policy change implementation | <input type="checkbox"/> CQI commitment (buy-in) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Collaboration w/agencies | <input type="checkbox"/> Data-driven decision-making |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Participation in CFSR process | <input type="checkbox"/> Performance measurement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Participation in CFSP/APSR process | <input type="checkbox"/> Community partnerships |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Awareness of evidence-based practices | <input type="checkbox"/> Research partnerships |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership | <input type="checkbox"/> Data systems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Currently available data (e.g., AFCARS) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tracking implementation/changes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Training evaluation | |

Evaluation/CQI efforts specific to:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preventing Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Quality legal representation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hearing quality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Timeliness/Permanency | <input type="checkbox"/> Well-being |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engagement/Presence of Parties | <input type="checkbox"/> ICWA |

Other: _____

Other: _____

VI. Self-Assessment – Capacity

We would like you to assess your current capacities related to knowledge, skills, resources, and collaboration by responding to the following 3 sets of questions.

1. Please indicate your level of agreement to the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have a good understanding of CQI.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand how to integrate CQI into all our work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am familiar with the available data relevant to our work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand how to interpret and apply the available data.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The CIP and the state child welfare agency have shared goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The CIP and the state child welfare agency collaborate around program planning and improvement efforts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have the resources we need to fully integrate CQI into practice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have staff, consultants, or partners who can answer my CQI questions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. How frequently do you engage in the following activities?

	<i>Never</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Always</i>
We use data to make decisions about where to focus our efforts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We meet with representatives of the child welfare agency to engage in collaborative systems change efforts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We evaluate newly developed or modified programs/practices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We use evaluation/assessment findings to make changes to programs/practices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CQI is integrated into all our projects.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

3. Please review the descriptions of the different levels of collaboration. Using the scale provided, please indicate the extent to which you currently interact with each other partner identified below.

	Networking 1	Cooperation 2	Coordination 3	Coalition 4	Collaboration 5	
Relationship Characteristics	--Aware of organization --Loosely defined roles --Little communication --All decisions made independently	---Provide info to each other --Somewhat defined roles --Formal communication --All decisions made independently	--Share information and resources --Defined roles --Frequent communication --Some shared decision making	--Share ideas --Share resources --Frequent and prioritized communication --All member have a vote in decision-making	--Members belong to one system --Frequent communication is characterized by mutual trust --Consensus is reached on all decisions	
	No Interaction at all 0	Networking 1	Cooperation 2	Coordination 3	Coalition 4	Collaboration 5
State Child Welfare Agency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tribal Child Welfare Agencies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tribal Courts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Department of Education/ School	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Law enforcement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Juvenile justice agency (e.g., DOJ)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Behavioral/mental health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Substance abuse/addictions management agency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: CIC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other: SQIC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: CSEC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

VII. Timeliness Data & Performance Measurement

The purpose of asking all the CIPs to report on timeliness measures has been to prompt you to identify available data, examine how you are currently doing, and make comparisons to how you have done in the past on specific measures. The goal is to help you identify where you are and encourage you to use data in a meaningful way in your systems change efforts. As such, we have restructured the timeliness requirements so that

*you can still report on the timeliness measures but have the option to report on other measures that you have found particularly meaningful in your work.*³

1. **Timeliness.** *Provide a narrative below describing where you are getting data and how you are calculating the timeliness measures you report. What is your universe of cases (e.g., what is your sample, exit or entry cohort, etc.)? Is the data from the agency (e.g., SACWIS), from a court case management system (e.g., Odyssey) or from another source? Do you have any concerns with the accuracy of the data?*

Nevada CIP developed and implemented a plan to collect and report on the original five timeliness measures mandated to be reported on by 2013: time to first permanency hearing, time to all subsequent hearings, time to permanency, time to filing of termination of parental rights, and time to termination of parental rights.

The CIP Coordinator had several discussions with DCFS; our data exchange consultant, Aaron Gorrell with Waterhole Software; and the AOC Research and Statistical Unit to begin to identify the best data source for these timeliness measures. It was concluded that the best source for these data is the SACWIS, UNITY. During discussions with DCFS, concerning accessing the initial timeliness measures from our SACWIS and subsequent research, it became clear that the calculation start date of when the petition was filed was not available in UNITY. There is no screen into which that data is entered. However, UNITY has good, clean data on the date of removal. As we proceed with the Centralized Case Index pilot project, date the original petition is filed may become available.

The Toolkit, however, indicates that using the date of removal may actually provide more reliable conclusions than initiating the calculation from the date the petition is filed. “The rationale for using the removal date as the calculation start date is that the time to permanency should relate to the child’s experience of not having a permanent home.” Additionally, the Toolkit continues that “because using the date petition is filed is based on the beginning of the litigation, the measure will include cases in which the child was never removed from the home. And if the child enters foster care long after the petition is filed, the calculated time to permanency will be much longer than the time the child actually spends in foster care”(page 159 of *Court Performance Measures in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases*).

DCFS’s AFCARS and National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) Specialist spent considerable time reviewing the technical guide from the Toolkit regarding Measure 4G, *Time to First Permanency Hearing*, and advised that Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) drive the first permanency hearing as follows: NRS 432B.590 states that annual disposition is not later than 12 months after the **initial removal**. So it would appear that, assuming all courts follow Nevada State law, they are setting the permanency hearing from the initial removal, not from the date the petition is filed.

Federal Law defines that date as the earlier of either the date of the first judicial finding that the child has been subjected to child abuse or neglect (this is usually adjudication) or 60 days after the date the child is removed from the home. This is known in Quality Assurance as the starting count for the 15 out of 22 months for filing of TPR, and is used in IV-E during a IV-E review. Not only will initiating timeliness calculations from the date of removal from home allow us to be consistent with State law, but also with AFCARS and NCANDS.

³ The OJJDP Toolkit that includes these performance measures is available online at: <http://www.ojjdp.gov/publications/courttoolkit.html>

With the DCFS Information Management Services (IMS) programmer and in consultation with our Region IX contacts, CIP defined the parameters for each of the timeliness measures. It was agreed that CIP would use an exit survey-type approach for all those children who are in custody and have reached whichever point in time (first, second permanency hearing, or permanent placement) during a particular range of times rather than a snapshot of those in foster care on a particular day. This allows calculations of a range of dates. Each “exit” will be the end point of each measure.

It was also agreed that the report would include up to the fifth subsequent hearing with the remainder being combined into an “all others” category. This determination was made based upon CFSR data that showed that in most cases children are out of foster care within 2 years. For those who are adopted or aged out of the system it is less than 4 years. By reporting out to the fifth subsequent hearing, details are reported on approximately 85% of the children. In the Quality Assurance section of the report, each child’s hearings is listed to allow reporting on those with more than five subsequent hearings.

When considering *Time to Permanent Placement*, time to each of the possible permanent situations (reunification, adoption, legal guardianship, and placement with a relative) is discretely identified as well as the total. In so doing, types of placements that may take longer can more easily be identified.

The report is delineated by each county within each judicial district. For example, the 1st Judicial District is composed of two counties. The report includes 1st JD – Storey County and 1st JD – Carson City. The judicial district of the first permanency hearing is the driver. In some instances, a case’s children may move from one county to another, but it is assumed that the case belongs to the initial county.

When calculating the *Time to Termination of Parental Rights* (TPR), relinquishment is being reported separately because a TPR petition is not filed in all relinquishment cases.

Please see the example below for the report logic, format, and access screen in UNITY. The fourth timeliness measure, from removal to date TPR petition is filed, cannot yet be calculated. There was no UNITY screen in which to enter the date the TPR petition is filed. As DCFS’ Information Management Systems (IMS) was uploading UNITY data to Chapin Hall, some potential modifications were identified. A TPR petition date filed screen was developed, however the only agency entering data into that screen has been Washoe County Department of Social Services. The other two child welfare agencies are working on rectifying this. Nonetheless, the historical data will not be entered into UNITY immediately, so reports cannot be run on the time from removal to TPR petition filed until some data on current cases has been entered. The Centralized Case Index pilot will assist with obtaining these data.

The quality of the data is only as good as the data entered. Much of the data entered into UNITY is entered by the caseworker.

Court Performance (CFSXXX)

Report Description

From: XXXXXXXXXX To: XXXXXXXXXX

Jurisdiction
 Clark State Washoe

Records Read: ZZZZ

Continue Cancel Schedule

Date Range

State/Clark/Washoe Check boxes

Population

Pull all children who are in custody/removed anytime between the date range (using the 'report driver' logic)

Ignore children based on their custody when it doesn't match the report parameters

For each child compute the following measures

- 1) Time to First Permanency Hearing – difference of time between when the child was 1st removed and when the first 'PERM' hearing occurred.
- 2) Time to all Subsequent Permanency Hearings – difference of time between the child's 1st 'PERM' hearing and 2nd 'PERM' hearing and 2nd and 3rd and so on. We will not include PERM Hearings > Today and > Report 'To' date.
- 3) Calculation based on Adult/Child relationships that have been terminated OR Relinquished in the UNITY application.
 Time difference between the removal and the termination/relinquishment entered in UNITY
 Include the number of parents included in this calculation
- 4) Display by court the end reason as to why a child's custody ended
 This information will be similar to CFS721 Foster Care Report

Court: (followed by the rest of the counties)

Notes The 'PERM' hearing will be tied to a 'Court Code'

QA option as well so users can look up the supporting data

In Excel sorted by child and hearing dates

Child ID, Child Name, Removal/Hearing Date

2. Nevada Court Timeliness Measures

		CY 2011 Baseline Measure (median days)	CY 2012 (median days)	CY 2013 (median days)	CY 2014 (median days)	3rd Qtr 2015 (median days)	CIP Projects Targeting Measures (if applicable) <i>[If this measure was targeted by an intervention (e.g., efforts made to improve timeliness), please list the project or activity here]</i>
	Required Timeliness Measures						
4G. Time to First Permanency Hearing		359	366	359	357	351	Dependency mediation, CASA, attorney training, pro bono programs, and CQI efforts
4H. Time to Termination of Parental Rights Petition		NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Dependency mediation, CASA, attorney training, pro bono programs, and CQI efforts
4I. Time to Termination of Parental Rights		764	699	599	608	614 (-20%)	CICs' focus on eliminating barriers to timely placement in their judicial districts and CQI efforts
4A. Time to Permanent Placement		848	729	675	688	634 (-25%)	CICs' focus on eliminating barriers to timely placement in their judicial districts and CQI efforts
	Optional Measures						
<i>Time to Reunification</i>							
<i>Time to Adoption</i>							
<i>Time to Guardianship</i>							
<i>Time to Emancipation</i>							
<i>Time to Subsequent Permanency Hearings</i>		367	199	348	182	182	Dependency mediation, CASA, attorney training, pro bono programs, and CQI efforts
<i>1B. Percentage of Cases that Re-enter within 1 year</i>							

3. **Other Measures.** *What other measures do you collect that you find particularly useful?*

CIP collects and distributes to the CICs the proportion of first permanency hearings that fall within the statutory requirements which paints a very different picture than simply considering the median days to permanency hearing. CIP also collects the proportion of youth who have been in care over one year. Each judicial district receives quarterly and annual data regarding the median days to reunification, adoption, guardianship, return to caretaker, turned over to Tribe. Statewide measures are not calculated.

Do you currently or have you recently collected any data on quality legal representation or quality court hearings that you would be willing to discuss and share?

NCJFCJ conducted court observations on 9 of our 10 judicial districts in 2014 to develop a baseline upon which to focus hearing quality improvement.

APPENDIX A: DEFINITIONS

Definitions of Evidence:

Evidence-based practice – evidence-based practices are practice that have been empirically tested in a rigorous way (involving random assignment to groups), have demonstrated effectiveness related to specific outcomes, have been replicated in practice at least one, and have findings published in peer reviewed journal articles.

Empirically-supported- less rigorous than evidence-based practices are empirically-supported practices. To be empirically supported, a program must have been evaluated in some way and have demonstrated some relationship to a positive outcome. This may not meet the rigor of evidence-base, but still has some support for effectiveness.

Best-practices – best practices are often those widely accepted in the field as good practice. They may or may not have empirical support as to effectiveness, but are often derived from teams of experts in the field.

Definitions for Work Stages:

Identifying and Assessing Needs – This phase is the earliest phase in the process, where you are identifying a need to be addressed. The assessing needs phase includes identifying the need, determining if there is available data demonstrating that this a problem, forming teams to address the issue.

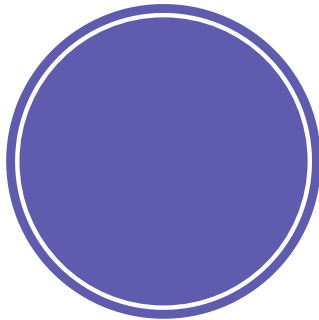
Develop theory of change—This phase focuses on the theorizing the causes of a problem. In this phase you would identify what you think might be causing the problem and develop a “theory of change”. The theory of change is essentially how you think your activities (or intervention) will improve outcomes.

Develop/select solution—This phase includes developing or selecting a solution. In this phase, you might be exploring potential best-practices or evidence-based practices that you may want to implement as a solution to the identified need. You might also be developing a specific training, program, or practice that you want to implement.

Implementation – the implementation phase of work is when an intervention is being piloted or tested. This includes adapting programs or practices to meet your needs, and developing implementation supports.

Evaluation/assessment – the evaluation and assessment phase includes any efforts to collect data about the fidelity (process measures: was it implemented as planned?) or effectiveness (outcome measures: is the intervention making a difference?) of the project. The evaluation assessment phase also includes post-evaluation efforts to apply findings, such as making changes to the program/practice and using the data to inform next steps.

Appendix



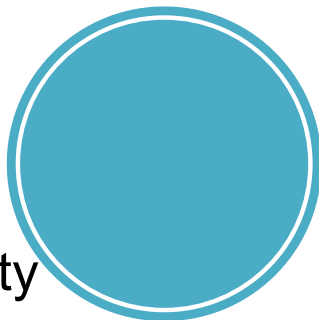
Well-Being



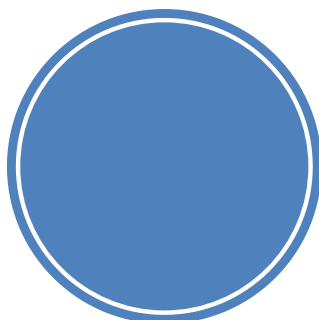
Quality



Safety



Stability



Permanency



Justice Saitta's
Letter Requiring
Community
Improvement
Councils
Formation

SUPREME COURT OF NEVADA
NANCY M. SAITTA, JUSTICE
201 SOUTH CARSON STREET
CARSON CITY, NEVADA 89701-4702
(775) 684-1530



October 27, 2010

The Honorable T. Arthur Ritchie, Jr.
Judge, Eighth Judicial District Family Court
200 Lewis Avenue
Las Vegas NV 89155

Dear Chief Judge Ritchie, Jr.:

cut

In response to a federal review of Nevada's child welfare system, the courts have been asked to identify barriers to permanency, timely adoption, and termination of parental rights. Work groups or "community improvement councils" (CIC) have proven to be very effective in other states. Because you are directly involved in the system, know what your local issues are and how best to resolve them, I would like you to convene and have one of the family court judges chair a CIC in your judicial district. These Councils should be composed of key local stakeholders and other system partners such as district attorneys, private attorneys, child welfare agency staff, CASAs, GALs, and other interested parties.

The goal of these CICs is to consider the current functioning and efficiency of the permanency timeframes by identifying and assessing the challenges and possible solutions specific to your jurisdiction. To accomplish this goal your CIC will meet two or three times over the next four months. Ideally, all the CICs should share their experiences and lessons learned.

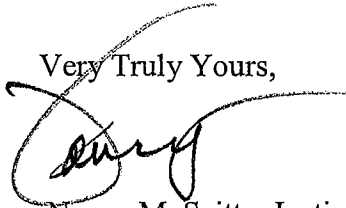
You will not be alone in this endeavor. The Court Improvement Program will provide you with information and staff support. CIP has some limited resources available to assist you with such things as facilitation of your Council, invitations to community members, or research data.

In the next day or two, you will receive a letter from Kathie Malzahn-Bass, CIP Coordinator, with more specific information on the Community Improvement Council process. Kathie plans to attend as many initial CIC meetings as possible. Please consider this letter as my "introduction" of Kathie. As the CIP coordinator, Kathie can assist you and identify opportunities during your council meetings where CIP might offer assistance.

I am counting on you to make your CIC a success. I know how busy you are, and I sincerely appreciate the time and effort you will give to this project. I believe that the court plays an important part in ensuring the system works for everyone.

Should you have any questions, please contact me directly at nsaitta@nvcourts.nv.gov or 775.684.1530.


Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nancy', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Nancy M. Saitta, Justice

rt

cc: Chief Justice Parraguirre
Judge Togliatti
Judge Sanchez
Judge Steel
K. Malzahn-Bass



CIP
Coordinator's
Follow-up
Community
Improvement
Councils Letter

Supreme Court of Nevada
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS



RONALD R. TITUS
Director and
State Court Administrator

JOAN E. NEUFFER, Esq.
Deputy Director
Legal

VERISE V. CAMPBELL
Deputy Director
Foreclosure Mediation

MARGARET EVANS
Deputy Director
Administration

ROBIN SWEET
Deputy Director
Judicial Programs & Services

SCOTT SOSEBEE
Deputy Director
Information Technology

November 1, 2010

The Honorable T. Arthur Ritchie, Jr.
Judge, Eighth Judicial District Family Court
200 Lewis Avenue
Las Vegas, NV 89155

Subject: Community Improvement Council Eighth Judicial District

Dear Chief Judge Ritchie, Jr.:

As Justice Saitta mentioned in her letter of October 27, 2010, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services conducted a Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) of Nevada's child welfare system. The review was on 23 items related to safety, permanency, and well being. Nevada did not meet substantial conformity on matters relating to timeliness of permanency including adoption finalization.

Unfortunately, Nevada fell below the National median for finalizing adoptions of those children, who became legally free to be adopted during the evaluation period.

10/08-9/09	National Median	Nevada
Adoptions finalized in less than 12 months	45.8%	34.7%

Our judicial districts ranged from finalizing about 12% to finalizing about 83% of the adoptions for their legally free children in less than 12 months.

In response to the findings of the CFSR, Nevada must complete a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) to address how improvement will be achieved. The child welfare agencies have asked the courts, as part of the PIP, to assess local successes and barriers within the courts and agencies to achieving timeliness to

Supreme Court Building ♦ 201 South Carson Street, Suite 250 ♦ Carson City, Nevada 89701 ♦ (775) 684-1700 · Fax (775) 684-1723

Regional Justice Center ♦ 200 Lewis Avenue, 17th floor ♦ Las Vegas, Nevada 89101

permanency and to adoptions, and recommend improvements. Successful development of plans to expedite permanency, and institute process changes to reduce future and ongoing barriers to permanency impact federal funding for our state.

Justice Saitta has asked that each Judicial District create a Community Improvement Council pulling together key, community stakeholders to discuss the successes and barriers, and identify solutions to achieve timeliness to permanency and to adoptions.

CIP will provide each judicial district with baseline data on the safety, permanency, and well-being of your children, to inform your work effort. We will also send a suggested action plan format on which you may report your recommendations. These data are important because they illustrate local trends, and demonstrate how these local trends relate to state and national standards. You and your CIC, however, have the anecdotal knowledge to see behind the numbers and understand the driving forces.

CIP does have some limited resources available to assist you. We have access to facilitators available to help guide your CIC discussions. We may even be able to help fund light refreshments if you gather during breakfast or lunch. If you need additional information or data, we will do our best to compile it.

Justice Saitta has asked that I attend as many of the initial CIC meetings as possible. I would appreciate you letting me know the dates and times you plan to meet, and I will forward you the data on your district.

We need your action plan in the CIP office by March 15, 2011, where it will be compiled with those from the other judicial districts and submitted to Department of Child and Family Services.

I look forward to meeting and working with you and to helping you and your Council in whatever manner you would like.

Sincerely yours,

Kathie Malzahn-Bass
Court Improvement Coordinator

rt
cc: Judge Togliatti
Judge Sanchez
Judge Steel



Court
Performance
Measures and
Statewide
Data
Summary

Court Performance Measures
 Statewide
 From: 07-01-2015 To: 09-30-2015

Court	Nbr of Children	Median Days to 1st Permanency Hearing	% <= 365 days from Removal Date	Median Days from 1st to 2nd Permanency Hearing	% <= 365 days from 1st Hearing	Median Days from 2nd to 3rd Permanency Hearing	% <= 365 days from 2nd Hearing	Median Days from 3rd to 4th Permanency Hearing	% <= 365 days from 3rd Hearing	Median Days from 4th to 5th Permanency Hearing	% <= 365 days from 4th Hearing	Median Days for all Subsequent Hearings	% <= 365 days from previous Hearing	Nbr of Parents with Termination	Median Days to Terminate Parental Rights	Nbr of Parents with Relinquishment	Median Days to Relinquishment of Parental Rights	Nbr of Parents with Termination or Relinquishment	Median Days to Termination or Relinquishment of Parental Rights
TOTAL	3506	351	78%	182	97%	182	93%	182	89%	182	83%	182	78%	1211	614	560	663	1771	627
1ST/CARSON	41	357	71%	363	55%	356	63%	-	0%	174	50%	-	0%	2	668	4	797	6	706
1ST/STOREY	1	362	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0
2ND/WASHOE	730	355	96%	157	94%	182	90%	182	81%	291	67%	357	61%	209	653	146	695	355	662
3RD/LYON	44	342	68%	168	74%	179	87%	189	50%	189	38%	315	50%	10	443	22	513	32	478
4TH/ELKO	49	358	82%	329	88%	338	57%	322	100%	335	67%	64	50%	4	675	12	1052	16	831
5TH/ESMERALDA	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0
5TH/NYE	56	333	55%	202	86%	182	88%	182	84%	182	96%	182	78%	9	735	17	528	26	695
6TH/HUMBOLDT	9	336	89%	313	75%	354	100%	310	75%	74	67%	75	89%	2	752	0	0	2	752
7TH/EUREKA	1	364	100%	-	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0
7TH/LINCOLN	2	336	50%	168	100%	182	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0
7TH/WHITE PINE	12	344	50%	355	83%	305	33%	287	100%	70	100%	315	50%	3	590	1	856	4	723
8TH/CLARK	2482	350	74%	182	99%	182	95%	182	92%	182	87%	182	81%	971	600	345	657	1316	613
9TH/DOUGLAS	20	346	45%	350	56%	315	33%	182	67%	-	0%	-	-	3	754	7	613	10	721
10TH/CHURCHILL	39	355	77%	182	86%	224	83%	42	100%	182	20%	357	65%	10	886	9	1316	19	1316
11TH/LANDER	8	362	50%	357	67%	196	63%	91	100%	77	100%	91	45%	7	1110	1	1106	8	1110
11TH/MINERAL	7	9	43%	63	88%	301	100%	230	71%	126	50%	301	56%	0	0	6	779	6	779
11TH/PERSHING	5	344	80%	179	80%	77	100%	140	100%	175	100%	168	60%	0	0	0	0	0	0

1ST/CARSON

End Reason	Nbr of Children	Average Nbr of Placements	Total Days in Custody	Median Days till closure
ADOPTIONLEGAL	1	1.00	1340	1340
RTNTOCARETAKER	2	1.00	912	456
RTNTOOTHRPRNT	2	1.00	1297	648

Quarterly Median Days to Permanency for the 1 st JD		
Median Days to Permanency	1 st Quarter 2015	432
Median Days to Permanency	2 nd Quarter 2015	950
Median Days to Permanency	3 rd Quarter 2015	462
Annual Median Days to Permanency		
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2010	1190
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2011	790
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2012	730
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2013	557
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2014	715

2ND/WASHOE

End Reason	Nbr of Children	Average Nbr of Placements	Total Days in Custody	Median Days till closure
ADOPTIONLEGAL	29	2.97	24912	768
AGED OUT	4	6.25	8667	2161
GRDNSHPRELATIVE	1	2.00	727	727
RTNTOCARETAKER	24	2.42	13093	534
RTNTOOTHRPRNT	2	1.00	724	362
RTNTOOTHRRELT	1	5.00	1813	1813

Quarterly Median Days to Permanency for the 2 nd JD		
Median Days to Permanency	1 st Quarter 2015	539
Median Days to Permanency	2 nd Quarter 2015	694
Median Days to Permanency	3 rd Quarter 2015	723
Annual Median Days to Permanency		
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2010	849
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2011	818
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2012	712
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2013	659
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2014	658

3RD/LYON

End Reason	Nbr of Children	Average Nbr of Placements	Total Days in Custody	Median Days till closure
ADOPTIONLEGAL	1	1.00	486	486
AGED OUT	1	15.00	4198	4198
RTNTOCARETAKER	1	3.00	503	503
RTNTOOHRRELT	1	1.00	16	16

Quarterly Median Days to Permanency for the 3rd JD		
Median Days to Permanency	1 st Quarter 2015	770
Median Days to Permanency	2 nd Quarter 2015	332
Median Days to Permanency	3 rd Quarter 2015	495
Annual Median Days to Permanency		
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2010	603
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2011	1128
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2012	1029
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2013	761
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2014	719

4TH/ELKO

End Reason	Nbr of Children	Average Nbr of Placements	Total Days in Custody	Median Days till closure
RTNTOCARETAKER	1	1.00	444	444

Quarterly Median Days to Permanency for the 4 th JD		
Median Days to Permanency	1 st Quarter 2015	314
Median Days to Permanency	2 nd Quarter 2015	571
Median Days to Permanency	3 rd Quarter 2015	444
Annual Median Days to Permanency		
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2010	1270
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2011	685
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2012	522
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2013	618
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2014	753

5TH/NYE

Quarterly Median Days to Permanency for the 5 th JD		
Median Days to Permanency	1 st Quarter 2015	900
Median Days to Permanency	2 nd Quarter 2015	718
Median Days to Permanency	3 rd Quarter 2015	-
Annual Median Days to Permanency		
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2010	1573
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2011	562
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2012	732
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2013	557
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2014	674

6TH/HUMBOLDT

End Reason	Nbr of Children	Average Nbr of Placements	Total Days in Custody	Median Days till closure
ADOPTIONLEGAL	1	10.00	1561	1561

Quarterly Median Days to Permanency for the 6 th JD		
Median Days to Permanency	1 st Quarter 2015	719
Median Days to Permanency	2 nd Quarter 2015	-
Median Days to Permanency	3 rd Quarter 2015	1561
Annual Median Days to Permanency		
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2010	1068
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2011	1564
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2012	581
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2013	966
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2014	810

7TH/WHITE PINE

Quarterly Median Days to Permanency for the 7 th JD		
Median Days to Permanency	1 st Quarter 2015	-
Median Days to Permanency	2 nd Quarter 2015	407
Median Days to Permanency	3 rd Quarter 2015	-
Annual Median Days to Permanency		
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2010	995
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2011	540
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2012	356
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2013	1206
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2014	948

8TH/CLARK

End Reason	Nbr of Children	Average Nbr of Placements	Total Days in Custody	Median Days till closure
ADOPTIONLEGAL	141	3.60	128604	784
AGED OUT	5	12.20	7610	829
GRDNSHPRELATIVE	10	1.70	5052	540
RTNTOCARETAKER	80	3.08	41066	490
RTNTOOTHRPRNT	69	2.93	38106	529
RTNTOOTHRRELT	2	1.00	1546	773

Quarterly Median Days to Permanency for the 8 th JD		
Median Days to Permanency	1 st Quarter 2015	595
Median Days to Permanency	2 nd Quarter 2015	631
Median Days to Permanency	3 rd Quarter 2015	625
Annual Median Days to Permanency		
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2010	793
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2011	869
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2012	735
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2013	679
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2014	691

9TH/DOUGLAS

End Reason	Nbr of Children	Average Nbr of Placements	Total Days in Custody	Median Days till closure
CUSTODIANSHIP	1	1.00	514	514

Quarterly Median Days to Permanency for the 9 th JD		
Median Days to Permanency	1 st Quarter 2015	-
Median Days to Permanency	2 nd Quarter 2015	665
Median Days to Permanency	3 rd Quarter 2015	514
Annual Median Days to Permanency		
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2010	241
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2011	478
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2012	418
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2013	399
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2014	537

10TH/ CHURCHILL (PREVIOUSLY 3RD/CHURCHILL)

End Reason	Nbr of Children	Average Nbr of Placements	Total Days in Custody	Median Days till closure
ADOPTIONLEGAL	1	2.00	1188	1188
RTNTOCARETAKER	1	3.00	748	748
RTNTOOTHRPRNT	1	1.00	441	441

Quarterly Median Days to Permanency for the 10th JD		
Median Days to Permanency	1 st Quarter 2015	818
Median Days to Permanency	2 nd Quarter 2015	401
Median Days to Permanency	3 rd Quarter 2015	748
Annual Median Days to Permanency		
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2010	726
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2011	699
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2012	601
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2013	650
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2014	831

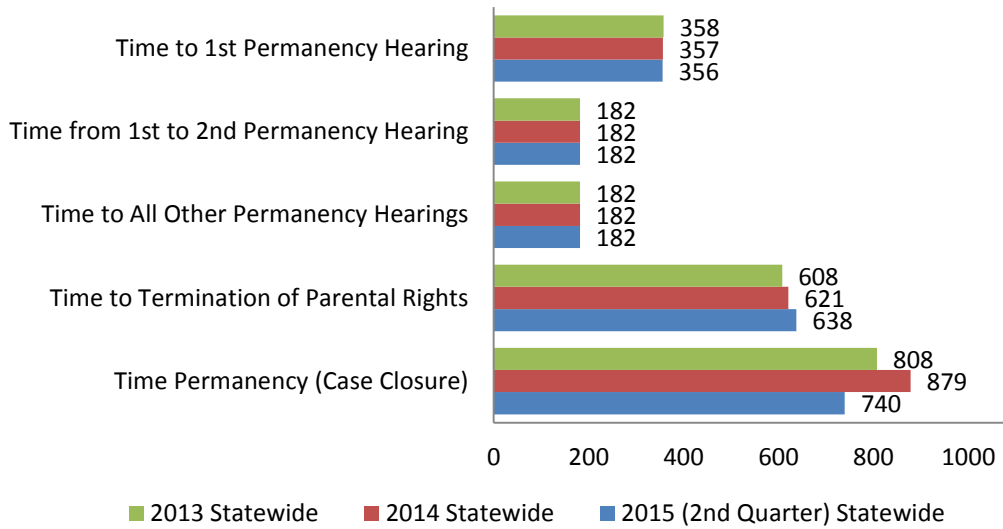
11TH

Quarterly Median Days to Permanency for the 11th JD		
Median Days to Permanency	1 st Quarter 2015	666
Median Days to Permanency	2 nd Quarter 2015	1320
Median Days to Permanency	3 rd Quarter 2015	-
Annual Median Days to Permanency		
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2010	1225
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2011	1589
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2012	1382
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2013	577
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2014	1252

STATEWIDE

Quarterly Median Days to Permanency Statewide		
Median Days to Permanency	1 st Quarter 2015	553
Median Days to Permanency	2 nd Quarter 2015	653
Median Days to Permanency	3 rd Quarter 2015	634
Annual Median Days to Permanency		
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2010	824
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2011	848
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2012	729
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2013	675
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2014	688

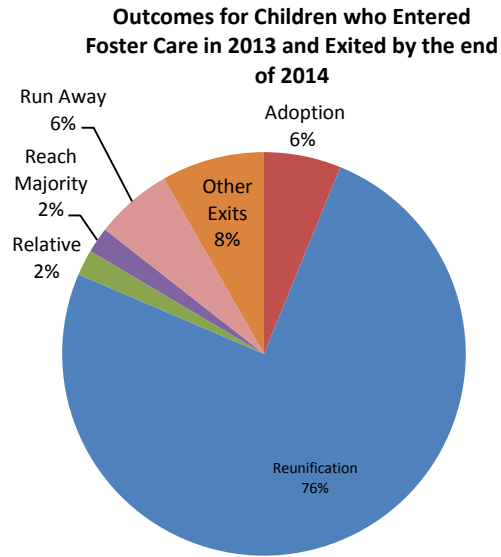
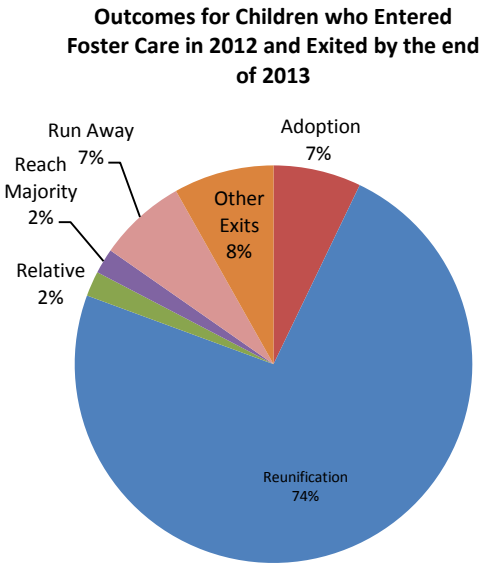
Statewide Timeliness Measures 2013, 2014 & 2015 (2nd Quarter)



75.4% of first permanency hearings met statutory requirements in 2014.

70% of first permanency hearings met statutory requirements in 2013.

Outcomes for Children Who Entered Foster Care in 2013 & 2014



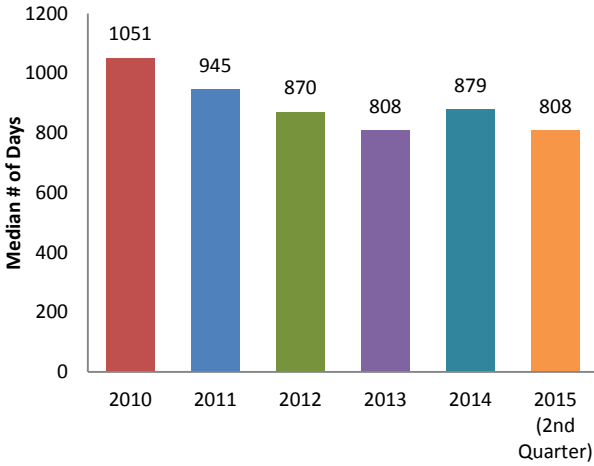
20% of youth had been in care over a year by the end of 2014.

24% of youth had been in care over a year by the end of 2013.

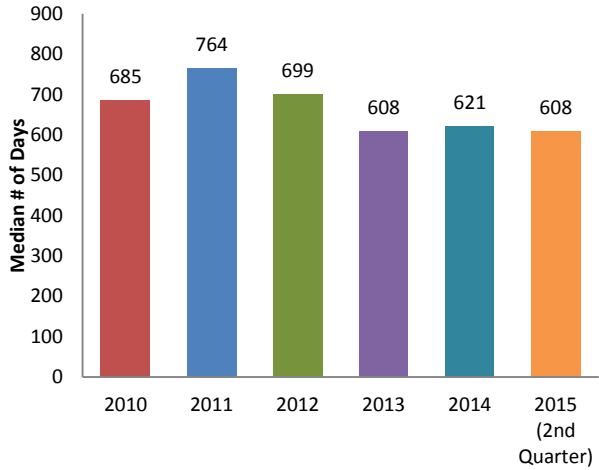
Placement Stability, For New Entries for 2011 - 2013 and Statewide, % of Placement Moves					
	No movement	One movement	2 to 3 movements	4 to 10 movements	More than 10 movements
Statewide 2012	38%	33%	22%	15%	1%
Statewide 2013	34%	35%	23%	8%	0%
Statewide 2014	30%	31%	27%	11%	1%

TRENDS

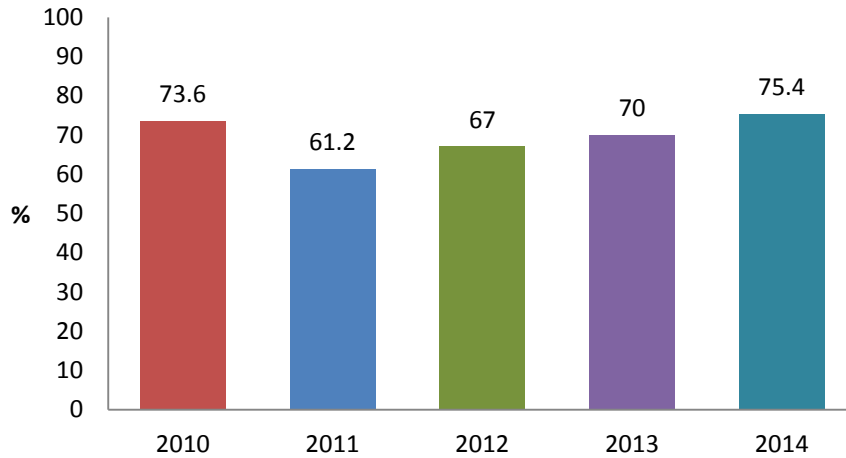
Time to Permanency (2010-2015)



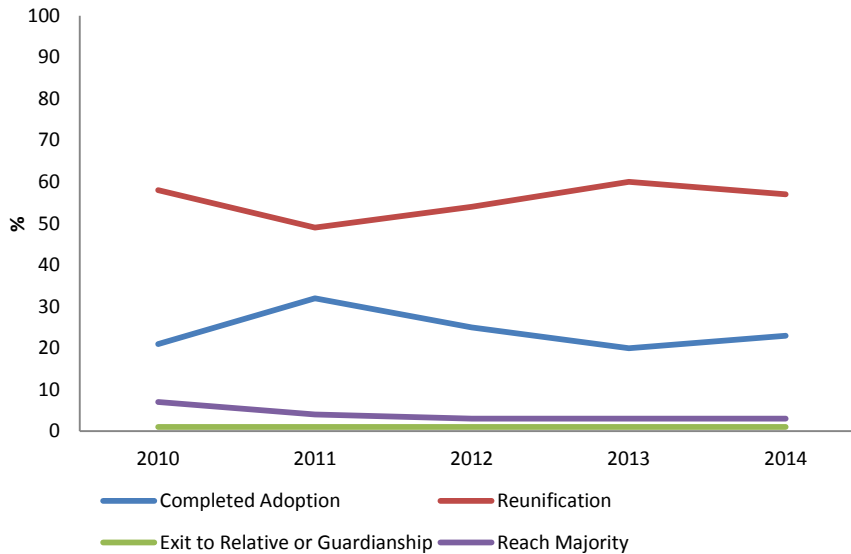
Time to Termination of Parental Rights (2010-2015)



Percentage of First Permanency Hearings That Met Statutory Requirement (2010-2014)



Percentage of Youth Exiting to Permanency (2010-2014)





2015
Community
Improvement
Councils
Summit
Agenda



Nevada Community Improvement Council 2015 Summit

**Hosted by
Nevada Court Improvement Program
&
National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges**

**THE NATIONAL JUDICIAL COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, RENO
RENO, NV
OCTOBER 1-2, 2015**

Strategies for Quality Hearings

Thursday, October 1, 2015

8:00 – 8:30 **Registration and Breakfast (provided in the NJC Cafeteria)**

8:30 – 8:45 **Welcome and Opening Remarks (NJC Classroom)**
Mari Kay Bickett, JD
Chief Executive Officer, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges

The Honorable Nancy M. Saitta
Associate Justice, Supreme Court of Nevada

The Honorable Katherine Lucero
Superior Court Judge, Santa Clara County, California

8:45 – 9:15 **What's Changed? (NJC Classroom)**
The purpose of this activity is to promote sharing across teams of strategies, practices, activities, and/or accomplishments that have furthered the implementation of best practices allowing the CICs to benefit from one another's experiences and expertise. Each team will designate a spokesperson to share what their CIC has done since the last Summit.

Franz Braun
Site Manager, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges

* This conference has been funded by the State Court Improvement Program grant CFDA 93.586 through the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families. Sec. 438, [42 U.S.C. 629th].

- 9:15 – 10:00** **Promising Practices: Dependency Mediation (NJC Classroom)**
 Review of the best practices and ethical issues of dependency mediation through a facilitated panel discussion staffed by stakeholders from the Second Judicial District.
 Facilitator – *The Honorable Katherine Lucero*
- Panelists – *The Honorable Deborah Schumacher (Ret.), Jeff Martin, Esq., Kathleen Baker, Esq., Emilie Meyer, Esq., and Margaret Crowley, Esq.*
- 10:00 – 10:15** **Break**
- 10:15 – 10:45** **Timeliness and Measurement Outcomes in Nevada’s Judicial Districts (NJC Classroom)**
 Review of data from each of the Judicial Districts on timeliness and related measurable outcomes. Each Judicial District will be provided an annual report.
Alicia Summers, Ph.D.
Program Director, Research and Evaluation
National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges
- 10:45 – 12:00** **Strategies for Quality Hearings (NJC Classroom)**
 Participants will learn strategies for implementing the principles of quality hearings. Strategies include how to effectively engage parents and children, and how to elicit information from stakeholders during the hearings on educational well-being, safety decision making, and permanency.
The Honorable Katherine Lucero
- 12:00 – 1:00** **Lunch (provided in the NJC Cafeteria)**
- 1:00 – 2:30** **Hearing Quality – Activity (NJC Classroom)**
 Participants will review video of dependency hearings from other jurisdictions and analyze best practices, challenges, and ethical considerations in conducting quality hearings. Worksheets will be provided to participants for this activity. Small group discussions will allow for discussion of the activity.
The Honorable Katherine Lucero
- 2:30 – 3:00** **Hearing Quality (NJC Classroom)**
 Review of the activity by way of a large group discussion.
The Honorable Katherine Lucero
- 3:00 – 3:15** **Break**

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3:15 – 4:15

Promising Practices: CIC Capacity Building (NJC Auditorium)

Panelists will discuss how they have increased the capacity and practice of their CIC through agenda development, effective use of subcommittees, scheduling regular meetings, and other tools.

Facilitator – *The Honorable Katherine Lucero*

Panelists – *The Honorable Egan Walker, Thomas Stockard, and Nathan Tod Young*

4:15 – 4:30

Wrap-up of First Day (NJC Auditorium)

The Honorable Katherine Lucero

Franz Braun

** This conference has been funded by the State Court Improvement Program grant CFDA 93.586 through the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families. Sec. 438, [42 U.S.C. 629th].*

Strategies for Quality Hearings

Friday, October 2, 2015

- 8:00 - 8:25** **Breakfast (provided in the NJC Cafeteria)**
- 8:30 – 9:30** **Nevada Promising Practices: Workshops (NJC Law Library)**
Workshops will focus on specific initiatives and programs from several Judicial Districts. Participants will self-select their first session and move to their second session after 25 minutes, attending a total of two sessions. The topic of each workshop will be introduced by the moderator(s) and followed by group discussion.
- Attorney Standards***
The Honorable Nancy Porter
4th Judicial District Court
- Education and Child Well Being***
Jeanne Marsh
Division Director, Washoe County Department of Social Services
- Trauma-informed Best Practices in Dependency Court***
Lorie Sicafuse, Ph.D.
Research Associate, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges
- Children in Court***
The Honorable Frank Sullivan
8th Judicial District Court
- Subsidized Guardianships***
Amber Howell
Director, Washoe County Department of Social Services
- Jill Marano*
Deputy Administrator, Nevada Division of Child and Family Services
- 9:30 – 9:45** **Nevada Promising Practice - Team Time (NJC Classroom)**
The Judicial District teams meet to discuss information from the workshops and plan how they can integrate this information into their CIC goals and action plans.
- 9:45 – 10:00** **Break**

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10:00 – 10:30

Continuous Quality Improvement (NJC Classroom)

A “do-it-yourself” CQI tool will be introduced and explained as a means of measuring progress among the CICs.

Alicia Summers, Ph.D.

Program Director, Research and Evaluation

National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges

Lorie Sicafuse, Ph.D.

Research Associate, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges

10:30 – 11:45

Action Planning (NJC Cafeteria)

Each Judicial District will meet to plan their goals and next steps based on information gathered during the Summit. NCJFCJ staff will be available to assist all of the Judicial Districts in understanding how measurable outcomes can be an integral part of the action planning process.

11:45 – 12:00

Evaluations, Next Steps, and Closing Remarks (NJC Cafeteria)

The Honorable Nancy M. Saitta

The Honorable Katherine Lucero

Franz Braun

Site Manager, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges

12:00

Adjourn Summit

Have a safe trip home!

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Examples of
Judicial
Districts'
Community
Improvement
Council
Agendas

Model Court Agenda Topics – October 19, 2015

- I. Calendaring Issues Follow-Up from September meeting:
- II. APPLA Follow-Up from September meeting (Shannon McCoy to bring case patterns/models):
- III. Cost of Care Waiver Follow-Up from September meeting (WCDSS):
- IV. Amended Orders (Judge Walker): Amended orders show up in D2 and we do not know the reason why they were sent over. How do we address this problem with keeping a clear record?
- V. Discovery Subcommittee Report
- VI. UCCJEA Declaration Issues

Next Model Court Meeting: Monday, November 16 at 12:00 in Courtroom 5

**FIFTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT
COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT COUNCIL**

November 18, 2015

1:30 p.m.

Nye County District Court Hearing Room

1520 E. Basin Ave.

Pahrump, NV 89060

- AOC Announcements – Kathie Malzahn-Bass
 - a. CSEC report
- From the Bench
- DCFS – Michael
- CASA – Marcy
- Court – Nola
 - a. CASA appointment orders for north (Beatty, Tonopah)
 - i. Who prepares?
 - ii. How to get petitions to her?
 - iii. Have Judge Lane sign?
 - iv. Every case?
- Announcements
- DCFS Grant from Betsy for Training
 - a. Court/ Report Presentation (November 30)
 - b. Child Abuse Investigation (December 14)
- Follow up:
 - a. CIC Summit Review
 - i. Thoughts and Impressions (Michael and Judge Klapper)
 - ii. Action Plan Review
 - b. Tim- Contact Jeff Martin and Judge Sullivan to find good adjudicatory
 - c. Review breakout sessions from CIC conference
 - d. Review action plans of other JDs
 - e. Shannon – talk to Jill about using VOCA money for dependency mediation
 - f. Marcy – is there a court brochure for kids?
- Removal Warrants Update – Shannon
- Mediation
- 432B Court Rules Commission - Tim
- Future agenda items
 - a. Data review?
- Schedule next meeting: December 16, 2015 at 1:30 p.m.

NOTES:

Sixth Judicial District
CIC Team Meeting Agenda
(Proposed)
October 21, 2015
Law Library, 12:30 p.m.

1. CIC Meetings (recurring date for meetings, identify stakeholders, administrative duties)
2. Identify and Prioritize Goals
 - a. Operative Documents (petitions, case plans, court orders)
 - b. CFT Meetings (attendance, scheduling)
 - c. Methods for Improving Family Involvement (presence of children, identification of necessary parties, signs)
 - d. Structure of Hearings (bench cards, formalize process, “elevation” of parties, attorneys at 72-hour hearings)
 - e. Mediation Program Implementation
 - f. Improving Timeliness Measures (law, scheduling hearings, calendars for parents)
3. Comments
4. Next Meeting Date

COURT IMPROVEMENT COUNCIL MEETING
SEVENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT
NOVEMBER 12, 2015
1:30PM

- Introductions
- Foster Parent Recruitment/Retention
 - Status of Recruitment Efforts
 - Open House
- State Court Improvement Conference – Report/Update
- Representation of children in hearings status
- Statute regarding Maltreatment AB 49 – Updates
- Discussion regarding warrants for removal
- Community Relationship Updates
 - Changes/Requests
- Other Questions/Concerns
- Next Meetings

Action Plan
Hearing Quality

SEVENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT
COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT
COUNCIL



October 2, 2015
Nevada Community Improvement Councils 2015 Summit

Topic: Implement strategies appropriate to Judicial District to improve hearing quality

Needs Statement:

Continue to focus on higher quality hearings

QUALITY HEARING

PRIORITIES TO IMPLEMENT QUALITY HEARING STRATEGIES	CONCRETE STEPS TO IMPLEMENT	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR ASSISTANCE NEEDED	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase child advocacy in court. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Judges to follow-up regarding attorney contact with children. CIC to continue looking at CASA implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funds and volunteers from local area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Owner: Judge Fairman and Judge Dobrescu Status: Fay Cavender Next Steps: Estimated Completion Date:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase court involvement with foster care recruitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Judges to participate in selected group presentation with faith based organizations and service clubs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster care recruitment supplies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Owner: Judges, DA's office, Public Defenders Status: Fay Cavender Next Steps: Estimated Completion Date:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase parent awareness and education regarding court process and procedure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and provide parents with timeline and workflow documents for NV / ASFA timelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Owner: All judicial personnel / Fay Cavender Status: Next Steps: Estimated Completion Date:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expedite parent awareness re: court orders and process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streamline written court orders for counsel to go over with parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Owner: Judicial personnel / Fay Cavender Status: Next Steps: Estimated Completion Date:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase mediation within judicial district 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reach out to CIC for funding to implement mediation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Owner: Judge Fairman, Judge Dobrescu and Fay Cavender ● Status: ● Next Steps: ● Estimated Completion Date:
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Positive Steps Being Taken in Judicial District:

Court reports and case plans being more child specific.

- Child Involvement ↑
- Attorney Involvement ↑
- Attorney Training ↑
- Child Attendance ↑

Court Performance Measures
 Statewide

From: 07-01-2015 To: 09-30-2015

Court	Nbr of Children	Median Days to 1st Permanency Hearing	% ≤ 365 days from Removal Date	Median Days from 1st to 2nd Permanency Hearing	% ≤ 365 days from 1st Hearing	Median Days from 2nd to 3rd Permanency Hearing	% ≤ 365 days from 2nd Hearing	Median Days from 3rd to 4th Permanency Hearing	% ≤ 365 days from 3rd Hearing	Median Days from 4th to 5th Permanency Hearing	% ≤ 365 days from 4th Hearing	Median Days for all Subsequent Hearings	% ≤ 365 days from previous Hearing	Nbr of Parents with Termination	Median Days to Terminate Parental Rights	Nbr of Parents with Relinquishment	Median Days to Relinquishment of Parental Rights	Nbr of Parents with Termination or Relinquishment	Median Days to Termination or Relinquishment of Parental Rights
TOTAL	3506	351	78%	182	97%	182	93%	182	89%	182	83%	182	78%	1211	614	560	663	1771	627
1ST/CARSON	41	357	71%	363	55%	356	63%	-	0%	174	50%	-	0%	2	668	4	797	6	706
1ST/STOREY	1	362	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0
2ND/WASHOE	730	355	96%	157	94%	182	90%	182	81%	291	67%	357	61%	209	653	146	695	355	662
3RD/ YON	44	342	68%	168	74%	179	87%	189	50%	189	38%	315	50%	10	443	22	513	32	478
4TH/ELKO	49	358	82%	329	88%	338	57%	322	100%	335	67%	64	50%	4	675	12	1052	16	831
5TH/ESMERALDA	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0
5TH/NYE	56	333	55%	202	86%	182	88%	182	84%	182	96%	182	78%	9	735	17	528	26	695
6TH/HUMBOLDT	9	336	89%	313	75%	354	100%	310	75%	74	67%	75	89%	2	752	0	0	2	752
7TH/EUREKA	1	364	100%	-	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0
7TH/LINCOLN	2	336	50%	168	100%	182	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0
7TH/AWHITE PINE	12	344	50%	355	83%	305	33%	287	100%	70	100%	315	50%	3	590	1	856	4	723
8TH/CLARK	2482	350	74%	182	99%	182	95%	182	92%	182	87%	182	81%	971	600	345	657	1316	613
9TH/DOUGLAS	20	346	45%	350	56%	315	33%	182	67%	-	0%	-	-	3	754	7	613	10	721
10TH/CHURCHILL	39	355	77%	182	86%	224	83%	42	100%	182	20%	357	65%	10	886	9	1316	19	1316
11TH/LANDER	8	362	50%	357	67%	196	63%	91	100%	77	100%	91	45%	7	1110	1	1106	8	1110
11TH/MINERAL	7	9	43%	63	88%	301	100%	230	71%	126	50%	301	56%	0	0	6	779	6	779
11TH/PERSHING	5	344	80%	179	80%	77	100%	140	100%	175	100%	168	60%	0	0	0	0	0	0

1ST/CARSON

End Reason	Nbr of Children	Average Nbr of Placements	Total Days in Custody	Median Days fill closure
ADOPTIONLEGAL	1	1.00	1340	1340
RTINTOCARETAKER	2	1.00	912	456
RTNTOOTHRPRNT	2	1.00	1297	648

Quarterly Median Days to Permanency for the 1 st JD	
Median Days to Permanency	1 st Quarter 2015
Median Days to Permanency	2 nd Quarter 2015
Median Days to Permanency	3 rd Quarter 2015
Annual Median Days to Permanency	
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2010
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2011
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2012
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2013
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2014

End Reason	Nbr of Children	Average Nbr of Placements	Total Days in Custody	Median Days till closure
ADOPTIONLEGAL	29	2.97	24912	768
AGED OUT	4	6.25	8667	2161
GRDNSTEPRELATIVE	1	2.00	727	727
RINTOCARETAKER	24	2.42	13093	534
RINTOOTHRRPNT	2	1.00	724	362
RINTOOTHRRRLT	1	5.00	1813	1813

Quarterly Median Days to Permanency for the 2 nd JD	
Median Days to Permanency	1 st Quarter 2015
Median Days to Permanency	2 nd Quarter 2015
Median Days to Permanency	3 rd Quarter 2015
Annual Median Days to Permanency	
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2010
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2011
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2012
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2013
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2014

3RD/LYON

End Reason	Nbr of Children	Average Nbr of Placements	Total Days in Custody	Median Days till closure
ADOPTION/LEGAL	1	1.00	486	486
AGED OUT	1	15.00	4198	4198
RTNTOCARETAKER	1	3.00	503	503
RTNTOOTHREELT	1	1.00	16	16

Quarterly Median Days to Permanency for the 3 rd JD	
Median Days to Permanency	1 st Quarter 2015
Median Days to Permanency	2 nd Quarter 2015
Median Days to Permanency	3 rd Quarter 2015
Annual Median Days to Permanency	
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2010
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2011
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2012
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2013
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2014

4TH/ELKO

End Reason	Nbr of Children	Average Nbr of Placements	Total Days in Custody	Median Days fill closure
RT/INOCARETAKER	1	1.00	444	444

Quarterly Median Days to Permanency for the 4 th JD	
Median Days to Permanency	1 st Quarter 2015
Median Days to Permanency	2 nd Quarter 2015
Median Days to Permanency	3 rd Quarter 2015
Annual Median Days to Permanency	
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2010
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2011
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2012
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2013
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2014

5TH/NYE

Quarterly Median Days to Permanency for the 5 th JD	
Median Days to Permanency	1 st Quarter 2015
Median Days to Permanency	2 nd Quarter 2015
Median Days to Permanency	3 rd Quarter 2015
Annual Median Days to Permanency	
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2010
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2011
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2012
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2013
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2014

6TH/HUMBOLDT

End Reason	Nbr of Children	Average Nbr of Placements	Total Days in Custody	Median Days fill closure
ADOPTION/LEGAL	1	10 00	1561	1561

Quarterly Median Days to Permanency for the 6th JD				
Median Days to Permanency	1 st Quarter 2015			719
Median Days to Permanency	2 nd Quarter 2015			-
Median Days to Permanency	3 rd Quarter 2015			1561
Annual Median Days to Permanency				
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2010			1068
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2011			1564
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2012			581
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2013			966
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2014			810

7TH/WHITE PINE

Quarterly Median Days to Permanency for the 7th JD				
Median Days to Permanency	1 st Quarter 2015			-
Median Days to Permanency	2 nd Quarter 2015			407
Median Days to Permanency	3 rd Quarter 2015			-
Annual Median Days to Permanency				
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2010			995
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2011			540
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2012			356
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2013			1206
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2014			948

8TH/CLARK

End Reason	Nbr of Children	Average Nbr of Placements	Total Days in Custody	Median Days till closure
ADOPTIONLEGAL	141	3.60	128604	784
AGED OUT	5	12.20	7610	829
GRDNSHPRELATIVE	10	1.70	5052	540
RTNTOCARETAKER	80	3.08	41066	490
RTNTOOTHRPNT	69	2.93	38106	529
RTNTOOTHRRELT	2	1.00	1546	773

Quarterly Median Days to Permanency for the 8 th JD	
Median Days to Permanency	1 st Quarter 2015
Median Days to Permanency	2 nd Quarter 2015
Median Days to Permanency	3 rd Quarter 2015
Annual Median Days to Permanency	
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2010
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2011
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2012
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2013
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2014

9TH/DOUGLAS

End Reason	Nbr of Children	Average Nbr of Placements	Total Days in Custody	Median Days till closure
CUSTODIANSHIP	1	1.00	514	514

Quarterly Median Days to Permanency for the 9 th JD				
Median Days to Permanency	1 st Quarter 2015	2 nd Quarter 2015	3 rd Quarter 2015	Median Days till closure
Median Days to Permanency	-	665	514	
Annual Median Days to Permanency				
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2010			241
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2011			478
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2012			418
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2013			399
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2014			537

10TH/ CHURCHILL (PREVIOUSLY 3RD/CHURCHILL)

End Reason	Nbr of Children	Average Nbr of Placements	Total Days in Custody	Median Days till closure
ADOPTIONLEGAL	1	2.00	1188	1188
RTNTOCARE/TAKER	1	3.00	748	748
RTNTOOTHRPNT	1	1.00	441	441

Quarterly Median Days to Permanency for the 10 th JD	
Median Days to Permanency	1 st Quarter 2015
Median Days to Permanency	2 nd Quarter 2015
Median Days to Permanency	3 rd Quarter 2015
Annual Median Days to Permanency	
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2010
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2011
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2012
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2013
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2014

Quarterly Median Days to Permanency for the 11 th JD		
Median Days to Permanency	1 st Quarter 2015	666
Median Days to Permanency	2 nd Quarter 2015	1320
Median Days to Permanency	3 rd Quarter 2015	-
Annual Median Days to Permanency		
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2010	1225
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2011	1589
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2012	1382
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2013	577
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2014	1252

STATEWIDE

Quarterly Median Days to Permanency Statewide		
Median Days to Permanency	1 st Quarter 2015	553
Median Days to Permanency	2 nd Quarter 2015	653
Median Days to Permanency	3 rd Quarter 2015	634
Annual Median Days to Permanency		
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2010	824
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2011	848
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2012	729
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2013	675
Median Days to Permanency per Year	CY 2014	688

CIC MEETING
December 16, 2015
11:00 TO 1:00 P.M.
Courtroom One

AGENDA



1. Approval of Minutes – 5/19/15 and 8/18/15 Meetings
2. Update Regarding CASA – DeVere Karlson, Project Manager
3. CIC Summit Review and Update – Judge Stockard and Kelli Weishaupt
4. CIC Mediator Training – March, 2016 – Kathie Matzlan-Bass
5. 432B Timeline Review – Deputy District Attorney Sanford
6. Case Plan Meetings – Karlson and Weishaupt
7. Foster Care - Weishaupt
8. Permanency Cases – Stockard
9. Future Agenda Items
10. Proposed Dates for 2016 Meetings – March 8, 2016 – 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.;
July 12, 2016 – 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.; CIC Summit Last Week of September;
or First Week of October, 2016; December 20, 2016 – 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.



Community
Improvement
Councils
Quarterly
Newsletters
Issues 5-8



Court Improvement Program

Community Improvement Councils Quarterly News October-December 2014

Issue 5

January 2015

Save the Date

2015 Community Improvement Council Summit

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Mark your calendars for September 30 - October 2, 2015, to join your fellow CIC members in Reno to learn and plan your next court improvement efforts. The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges will be surveying all CIC members to ascertain topic preferences for our time together. Please be certain to respond to this survey to ensure that your ideas are included.

Highlights of the CIC Action Plans

All 10 Community Improvement Councils (CICs) created action plans to improve the quality of their hearings at the 2014 Annual CIC Summit last October. Some of the highlights of these action plans include:

- ◆ All CICs intend to implement WATCH – Asking, “Why aren’t the children home?”
- ◆ 80% of the courts plan to implement case plan summaries
- ◆ Half of the judicial districts intend to increase their efforts to include children in their dependency hearings
- ◆ 40% are planning some sort of system collaboration improvement
- ◆ 40% plan to actively engage and/or notify parties
- ◆ 30% intend to focus on child well-being
- ◆ 30% plan to do work on case plans
- ◆ 30% would like to integrate mediation or settlement conferences into their dependency processes
- ◆ 20% plan to focus on attorney standards, confirming ICWA status, legal representation, safety needs of children, or CASA



The 2014 CIC Summit – What You Thought

All those attending the 2014 CIC Summit declared it a success! Comments included: “Best Summit of 3 years I’ve attended,” “The education I received was much more thorough than anticipate,” “It was great to break down each hearing type and receive feedback on our hearings,” “Good time to have open discussions about issues with current cases/caseloads,” and “It was really beneficial to participate with our jurisdiction’s team in this training.”

Following the session, 92% of the participants felt that they were either knowledgeable or very knowledgeable about the principles of quality hearings compared to only 56% before attending the Summit.

The top three responses to the survey question, “what outcome(s) do you believe can be improved by applying the information you learned?” were: 1) improve well-being outcomes (81%), 2) achieve more timely permanency (56%), and improve safety outcomes (49%).

4th Judicial District Asks the Question

When simply asking parents if they have any Native American heritage, 4th Judicial District Special Court Master Andy Mierins was surprised to find that in 86% of the cases (12 out of 14) the response was yes. Over a two week period following the CIC Summit, Master Mierins followed the recommendations of the National Council of Juvenile

and Family Court Judges as set forth in its Enhanced Resource Guideline’s Bench Cards.

The stakeholders discussed these results at a round table and decided that Master Mierins will continue this practice. Although the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) had already asked the parents about Native heritage, at the hearing

the parents may be listening and better understanding the question or may be more forthcoming. As a result of implementing what Judge Rubin taught at the CIC Summit, the court is gaining more information, especially about ICWA, which helps improve the quality of the court’s response to children and families in crisis

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Andrew Mierins
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Mediation Program Receives Grant Program Evaluations Help

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The 2nd JD’s Mediation Program reports that it received a grant for nearly one-third more than it requested because the program was able to demonstrate the positive impact it has had on the child welfare system overall.

When the program informed potential funders that the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges found that reunification was 76% more likely in mediated

than non-mediated cases; and fathers participating in mediation were 44% more likely to engage in their cases, the funders were most impressed. Additionally, the judiciary and other key stakeholders are collaborating on concrete plans for continuing funding, in part due to the results of the most recent impact study. CIP has committed to helping programs that implement best-practices ensure

their sustainability by ultimately providing them with tools that demonstrate their value to other funders. These tools include evaluations by an independent and well-respected third party (National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges) and CIP grant matches.

Blue Ribbon for Kids Commission

**For Additional
Information
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Bass
CIP Coordinator**

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nv.gov**

In October, Nevada Supreme Court Justice Nancy M. Saitta convened a Blue Ribbon for Kids Commission. The Commission plans to propose a feasible plan of action to expeditiously implement lasting reforms of the child welfare system that will ensure that the welfare of the children under its charge is its highest priority. Initially the Commission was to identify solutions for issues in Clark County's child welfare system. It became apparent that these issues are universal to one de-

gree or another throughout not only Nevada, but the country. The recommendations of the Commission are expected to be holistic in that they may be utilized throughout the State.

The Commission is in the information gathering phase. Judge Stephen Rubin, Ret. is helping the Commission focus on data-informed decision-making. Dr. Sophia Gadowski, nationally recognized expert in systems change, will be writing and Judge Rubin

will be editing the Commission's "roadmap for change" to be presented the end of January, 2015.

This "roadmap" will be designed to offer the courts evidence-based, best practices that they may implement. Technical assistance will be sought to assist implementation of the "blueprint" and to conduct process and impact evaluation of this implementation effort.

Independent Living Program For Youth Aging Out of the System

Who is eligible?

The Independent Living Program services are available to youth 15 and older who are currently in foster care and to former foster care youth who aged-out of the foster care system at age 18. Independent Living services are also available to youth who were adopted from foster care on or after their 16th birthday. Young people who aged-out may continue receiving services until age 21. Nevada will extend independent living services to youth who have aged out of care in another state.

What are the Independent Living Services?

Some of the services provided through the Independent Living Program include:

- Daily living skills
- Money management
- Decision making
- Housing assistance
- Substance abuse prevention, nutrition education and pregnancy prevention
- Preparation for postsecondary training and education
- Mentors
- Financial assistance with college or vocational schools
- Medical coverage
- Counseling
- Assistance in obtaining the GED

**For Additional
Information Contact:**

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Statewide Independent
Living Specialist-SSPS II
Division of Child and
Family Services**

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Did you know?

Did you know that the President signed the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act, Public Law (P.L. 113-183) into law on September 29, 2014? This law reduces the age of those eligible from 15 down to 14 years for youth to become eligible for the Independent Living Program. This means that contact and services will be made available to youth sooner. They can begin to benefit from everything the program has to offer, and get a head start on the path to successful adulthood.

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Administrative Office of the Courts
Court Improvement Program
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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://nevadajudiciary.us/index.php/courtimprovementprogram>

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Court Improvement Program

Community Improvement Councils Quarterly News January-March 2015

Issue 6

April 2015

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Save the Date

2015 Community Improvement Council Summit

September 30 - October 2, 2015

CIC members will meet in Reno to learn and plan their next court improvement efforts.

Indian Child Welfare Act

Assistant Secretary Washburn announces 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.

The purpose of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) is "...to protect the best interest of Indian Children and to promote the stability and security of Indian tribes and families by the establishment of minimum Federal standards for the removal of Indian children and placement of such children in homes which will reflect the unique values of Indian culture..." (25 U.S. C. 1902). ICWA provides direction to States regarding the handling of child abuse and neglect and adoption cases involving Native children and sets minimum standards for the handling of these cases.

The guidelines will provide long-overdue guidance to state courts as they work daily to ensure full implementation of the law. The updated guidelines will help ensure tribal children are not removed from their communities, cultures and extended families. The guidelines clarify the procedures for determining whether a child is an Indian child, identifying the child's tribe, and notifying its parent and tribe as early as possible before determining placement. The updated guidelines also now provide comprehensive guidance on the application of active efforts to prevent the breakup of the Indian family. They also provide clarification that ICWA's provisions carry the presumption that ICWA's placement preferences are in the best interests of Indian children.

The link below will take you to the updated guidelines posted on CIP's website, just copy and paste:

<http://www.nevadajudiciary.us/index.php/viewdocumentsandforms/func-startdown/11187>

**New
Guidelines
Effective
Feb. 25,
2015**

Regional Mediation Center Being Explored

Mediation has been highly successful in the 10th Judicial District. The mediations held to date have all come to successful agreement. These mediations have focused on everything from permanency plans and reunification to permanent guardianship or termination of parental rights. Judge Stockard is so pleased with the outcomes, that he is considering the possibility of developing a regional mediation center. Other judicial districts interested in exploring this concept further, please contact the 10th JD.

**For Additional
Information Contact:**

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National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges Conducting Trauma Audit in the First Judicial District

The First Judicial District has accepted the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges' (NCJFCJ) offer to conduct a trauma audit of its dependency court. NCJFCJ will be looking at the court practice and environment through a trauma-

informed lens. It has been recognized that many of the children and families who come before the juvenile court system have experienced prior (or current) trauma that could be impacting their behavior, physical health, and mental health. The court has an opportunity to promote

systems of healing for families that come before it. The trauma assessment reviews current policy, practices, and environment of the court. NCJFCJ reports back on what it learned and identifies the current successes and challenges of the court in this area. These audits

are being conducted all over the country. NCJFCJ has conducted 11 audits to date, and has a waiting list of courts wishing to have a trauma audit.

Educational Champions Coming To Washoe County



Leading research from around the country show that foster youth are likely to change schools when first entering care. They are twice as likely to be absent from school and 2.5 to 3.5 times more likely to receive special education. Fewer than half of the youth in foster care graduate from high school and only 2 to 9% attain a bachelor's degree. The

Washoe County Department of Social Services wants to turn these statistics around for children under their care. It applied for a two year grant to provide educational case management and mentoring support for transition-age foster youth, and to evaluate the effectiveness and efficacy of this intervention. The program will use ex-

perienced "Educational Champions" to provide educational supports for each foster youth to help guide and motivate them. Data will drive advocacy-related decision making for the students, and will be used to measure intervention outcomes.

CASA UPDATES

**For Additional
Information
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**Chris Bayer,
Director, CASA of
Carson City
www.casaofcc.org**

Nevada's CASA organizations have restarted the Nevada State CASA Association. The statewide organization has been restructured using a "network" model in which the statewide group's voting board consists of the local CASA organization directors. Lyon County recently joined

the CASA movement and Caroline Panches is now directing Lyon County CASA. The Pioneer Territory CASA hosted their sold out CASA Crab Crack in Pahrump raising \$5,000. They have already planned a Hawaiian Luau on September 12th. The new CASA of Churchill County has

trained and sworn in 13 CASAs who have a caseload of 15 cases serving 28 youth. The 7th Judicial District is exploring the possibility of creating a CASA organization in its three counties.

Blue Ribbon for Kids Commission

Recommendations Released

On March 27, 2015, Nevada Supreme Court Justice Nancy M. Saitta presented the final recommendations report from the Blue Ribbon for Kids Commission. This report is the first step in an ongoing strategic planning and reform process that will provide a comprehensive and sustainable strategy for realizing the goal of a child-centered, self-improving, and sustainable child welfare system to support our most vulnerable children and families.

The recommendations include:

- *Improve Reasonable Efforts and Child Safety and Removal Decision-Making*
- *Reform of the Child Welfare Agency Process*
- *Reform of the Court Process*
- *Ensure Meaningful Representation and Voice in the Process from the Initiation of Proceedings*
- *Selection, Retention, Training, and Ongoing Professional Development for all Stakeholders*
- *Improve Public Education about the System*
- *Collaboration for Systemic Overarching Reform*

In the next phase of the Commission's work, the recommendations and implementation strategies will be used as a road map for stakeholders to work together to make each one a reality. Under the guidance of the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs Diagnostic Center, workgroups and committees will be convened to engage in strategic action planning for each recommendation's implementation.

While these recommendations were developed for Clark County, the Commission considered data from the entire state and national-level research about best practices in dependency. This means that some or all of the recommendations may be applicable and transferable to other jurisdictions throughout the State.

All CICs are encouraged to examine the recommendations and determine whether implementing any of these recommendations is appropriate, and might lead to improved dependency outcomes in their judicial districts. CIP is committed to assisting the CICs in their efforts.

Please copy and past the link below to see the report in its entirety.
<http://www.nevadajudiciary.us/index.php/blue-ribbon-committee>

For Additional Information Contact:
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 courtimprovementprogram](http://nevadajudiciary.us/index.php/courtimprovementprogram)

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.



**5th Judicial District
 Judges On The Road**

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8th JD	Lori Parr parrl@clarkcountycourts.us
9th JD	Brenda Hoelzen bhoelzen@douglas.nv.gov
10th JD	Sue Sevon ssevon@churchillcounty.org



Court Improvement Program

Community Improvement Councils Quarterly News April-June 2015

Issue 7

July 2015

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Judge Katherine Lucero to Facilitate

2015 Community Improvement Council Summit

September 30 - October 2, 2015

**Judges Identify Theme
for**

2015 Community Improvement Council Summit

The majority of the Community Improvement Councils (CICs) elected “strategies for quality hearings” as the theme for the 2015 CIC Summit. An equal number are also interested in learning about current hearing practices or projects in other Nevada Judicial Districts.

All 10 judicial districts responded to the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges’ *Post-2014 CIC Summit* survey regarding what was learned at the Summit, what was implemented, and how hearing practices changed as a result of the Summit. It also explored what else the CICs would like to know about hearing quality, how the CICs are tracking the impact of their efforts, and what technical assistance they could use.

The judiciary appreciated receiving the “constructive feedback” on the way 432B hearings are conducted and the “professional assistance to formulate ways to change and improve” during the 2014 CIC Summit. As a result of what they learned, many courts are including children more regularly at hearings or are extending invitations to attend. They are taking more time to explain the process and discuss the child’s circumstances and progress while in foster care, and ICWA is being addressed more often. However, most CICs are not yet tracking the impact of their efforts and are asking for help with this.

Strategies
for
Quality
Hearings

The Honorable Katherine Lucero to Provide Judicial Facilitation at 2015 CIC Summit

Judge Katherine Lucero, who currently sits as Supervising Judge in Juvenile Dependency Court in Santa Clara County, California, will facilitate the 2015 CIC Summit. Judge Lucero has been on the cutting edge of implementing best practices and strategies to improve dependency hearings. She has dedicated most of her career to children’s problems; before appointment to the bench in 2001, Judge Lucero was a Deputy District Attorney specializing in crimes against children and the elderly. After taking the bench, she has continued her work with children and families through her leadership in court innovations.

Judge Lucero has trained other judges and child welfare professionals at local, state, and national conferences on issues involving the impact of domestic violence on children, on family drug courts, on immigration issues in dependency court, on the disproportionate impact of the child welfare system on children of color, on implementing fostering connections in the courts, and on collaborative courts, and systems change for permanency.

She will help Nevada’s Community Improvement Councils focus on specific strategies to improve hearing quality with particular emphasis on what Nevada courts are already doing well.

**For Additional
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CIP Coordinator**

**kmalzahn-
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CIP Annual Meeting Focuses on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children



During the second week of June, a Nevada CIP team of four: the Honorable Frank Sullivan, DAG Sharon Benson, DCFS Deputy Administrator Jill Marano, and CIP Coordinator Kathie Malzahn-Bass joined teams from all 50 states and several U.S. territories at the Children's Bureau's CIP Annual meeting in Washington D.C. which included a special one day convening at the White House. The major focus of the three-day meeting was the problem of human sex traffick-

ing and the importance of collaboration among the courts, child welfare agencies, law enforcement, and other partners; all part of the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014 (Act). The Nevada Team developed an action plan that will guide the framework of Nevada's response to the Sex Trafficking Provisions of PL No. 113-183 and improve the identification of and outcomes for youth at risk of sexual exploitation.

The Act is designed to help reduce the incidence of sex trafficking among youth in foster care, assist in creating normalcy for children in foster care via the reasonable and prudent parenting standard, increase the speed with which permanency for children in foster care is achieved, and increase the amount of support for families by improving the adoption incentive payments and extending the family connection grants program.

For additional information copy and paste the links below:
<https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/4980>
<http://www.ncjfcorgj./DCST-TAB>

Project ONE: When Systems Collide

The Second Judicial District, Judge Egan Walker, and the Project ONE team envision an expedited and coordinated judicial system for cases involving children, youth, and families that ensures swift, fair justice and access to appropriate and supportive services that promote positive outcomes and prevent unnecessary court involvement. The “ONE” stands for ONE family, ONE judge, with NO wrong door for entry into the system, and EQUAL and coordinated access to justice. Since May 2012 the Team has made great progress identify-

ing youth dually involved in both the dependency and juvenile justice systems. Workgroups have been established and have developed a protocol for sharing resources and coordinating services. Joint training has been provided to both the Juvenile and Social Services staff. Social Services facilitate the Child and Family Team meetings to develop an interagency care plan. One judge drives the collaborative process having probation officers attend dependency hearings and social workers attend delinquency hearings resulting in one set of

court orders. Data sharing is institutionalized and data collection has begun. The stage is set to develop a data system to track outcomes and guide program development.

Project ONE provides the missing link for intensive collaboration on behalf of dually involved youth. Expectations are clear for families and agencies and duplication of effort is eliminated. Unified judicial leadership provides the necessary structure to institutionalize collaboration and guide improvement.

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Laura.Watts-Vial@washocourts.us

Project ONE Teams from Throughout the Country



Churchill County Commission Helps Fund Highly Successful CASA Program

As part of its sustainability plan for its one-year old CASA Program, the 10th Judicial District Court (JD) requested and received funding as part of the Churchill County FY 2016 budget. The \$38,500 will fund volunteer training, the case management system, fuel and maintenance of the CASA van and ensure that the trained volunteers are reimbursed for their mileage when providing services to families and children involved the 10th JD’s dependency court. The services provided by CASA would cost the county nearly \$364,000 per year if not for these dedicated volunteers.

Currently Churchill County CASA has 13 trained volunteers providing services to 24 families and 47 youth. It also supervises visits between parents and their children. The community has enthusiastically embraced the CASA Program and helped establish a Kids Klost which is available 24 hours per day to the CASA volunteer and the Division of Child and Family Services worker when there is a need for clothing and personal items for youths following removal from their homes. Additionally, the community has contributed approximately \$8,000 to implement and support this growing program.

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**CIP Working for the Protection &
 Permanency of Dependent Children
 Visit Our Web Site**

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

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9th JD	Brenda Hoelzen bhoelzen@douglas.nv.gov
10th JD	Sue Sevon ssevon@churchillcounty.org



Court Improvement Program

Community Improvement Councils Quarterly News July-September 2015

Issue 8

October 2015

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2015 Community Improvement Council Summit



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

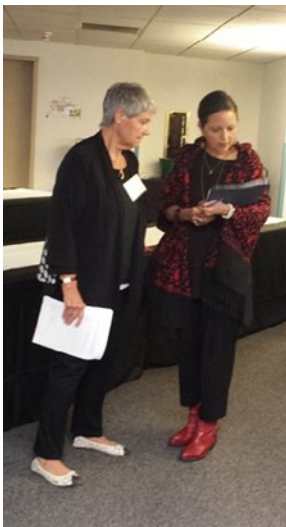
Eleven Community Improvement Councils (CICs) converged at the National Judicial College to learn about specific strategies to improve dependency hearing quality under the facilitative guidance of the Honorable Katherine Lucero, Superior Court of Santa Clara County.

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

For Additional Information Contact:

Jill Marano,
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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

**For Additional
Information
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ICWA Liaison
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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.



**For Additional Information Contact:
Sue Sevon, Court Administrator, 10th JD
ssevon@churchillcourts.org**

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>

**For Additional Information Contact:
Judge Nancy Porter
4th Judicial District Court, Department 1
nporter@elkocountynv.net**



Nevada Supreme Court
 Administrative Office of the Courts
 Court Improvement Program
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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/
 courtimprovementprogram](http://nevadajudiciary.us/index.php/courtimprovementprogram)

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Judicial
Officer
2015
Roundtable
Agenda



Nevada Community Improvement Council Judicial Officer 2015 Roundtable


**Hosted by
Nevada Court Improvement Program
&
The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges**

**THE NATIONAL JUDICIAL COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, RENO
RENO, NV
SEPTEMBER 30, 2015**

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

- 12:00 – 1:00** **Registration and Lunch (provided in the NJC Cafeteria)**
- 1:00 - 1:15** **Welcome and Opening Remarks (NJC Law Library)**
*The Honorable Nancy M. Saitta,
Associate Justice, Supreme Court of Nevada*
- The Honorable Katherine Lucero
Superior Court Judge, Santa Clara County, CA*
- 1:15 - 2:30** **Round Table Discussion (NJC Law Library)**
This session will cover major federal and state legislation in the areas of child protection, child welfare and adoption. Several key laws and issues will be discussed, including ethical considerations related to dependency cases.
The Honorable Nancy M. Saitta
- The Honorable Katherine Lucero*
- 2:30 – 2:45** **Break**
- 2:45 – 4:00** **Round Table Discussion (NJC Law Library)**
The session will continue the discussion around key state laws and issues and the ethical and legal issues of medical marijuana in dependency cases.
The Honorable Nancy M. Saitta
- The Honorable Katherine Lucero*
- 4:00 - 4:15** **Evaluations, Next Steps, and Closing Remarks (NJC Law Library)**
The Honorable Nancy M. Saitta

* This conference has been funded by the State Court Improvement Program grant CFDA 93.586 through the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families. Sec. 438, [42 U.S.C. 629th].



“A Guide to
Integrating
Continuous Quality
Improvement into
the Work of the
Community
Improvement
Councils”



A Guide to
**Integrating
Continuous Quality
Improvements**
into the Work of the
**Community
Improvement
Councils**



NATIONAL COUNCIL OF
JUVENILE AND FAMILY COURT JUDGES

WWW.NCJFCJ.ORG



The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges® (NCJFCJ) headquartered on the University of Nevada campus in Reno since 1969, provides cutting-edge training, wide-ranging technical assistance, and research to help the nation's courts, judges, and staff in their important work. Since its founding in 1937 by a group of judges dedicated to improving the effectiveness of the nation's juvenile courts, the NCJFCJ has pursued a mission to improve courts and systems practice and raise awareness of the core issues that touch the lives of many of our nation's children and families.

For more information about the NCJFCJ or this guide, please contact:

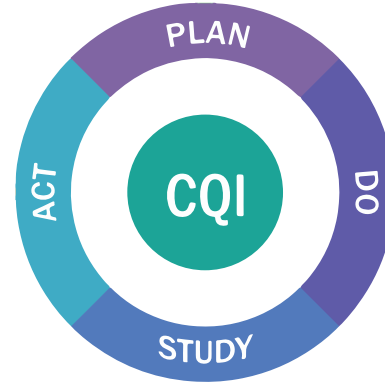
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INTRODUCTION

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI), is an important part of systems change efforts. CQI has been defined as “the complete process of identifying, describing, and analyzing strengths and problems and then testing, implementing, learning from and revising solutions.” Simplified, the model identifies the cyclical steps in a process of systems change—the plan, do, study, act model (illustrated below). It is important to **plan** for systems change, using the most current or most available data that you have. From this, you plan to make a change. Then you **do**, or implement a change. Then, you must assess what you have done (**study**). Assessment does not have to be a complex process, it often requires a simple monitoring of whether the change was implemented as expected and what occurred after that. Following the study phase, you use the information/data that you gathered to set a course of action (**act**). You take an action to either change the program/practice that you implemented to make it better, or you



implement it full scale. Then the process begins anew. It is important as stakeholders who work with some of the nation’s most vulnerable youth to examine practices and programs and make sure that what we are doing has its desired effect and is not harming kids. By integrating CQI into current discussions and planning, it allows for an opportunity to assess any changes in practice and determine if you are moving in the right direction, or if you need to course correct and make adjustments to what you are doing to better serve the needs of the families you serve.


USING *this* GUIDE

This *Guide* offers practical suggestions for steps to fully integrate CQI into planning and action within your Community Improvement Council (CIC). Steps are identified along the way with helpful questions for you to ask yourself about current practice. The *Guide* also offers some concrete suggestions for tools to gather data, and examples of process and outcome measures that may be helpful in studying whether the changes

you have made have had an impact. Included in each step of the process is a CQI Self-Assessment. Self-assessment asks questions to help you think about where you are in the process. If the answer to any of the questions is NO, the next question is *why not?* If you are stuck at a step in the process, technical assistance is available to you to help move you forward toward successful integration of CQI into your systems change efforts.

> STEP 1:

ESTABLISH *a* DEDICATED COLLABORATIVE TEAM



Continuous Quality Improvement is not a one-time activity. It is an ongoing process and often requires stakeholders to adopt a new way of thinking about achieving systems change, which ideally permeates into organizational cultures. Each judicial district in Nevada has established a Community Improvement Council (CIC), a collaborative team comprised of diverse stakeholders who are dedicated to improving system processes and outcomes. This is a critical first step in any CQI endeavor. These teams work to identify system needs and areas for improvement; to coordinate and implement improvement efforts; to assess the effectiveness of improvement efforts; and to determine what changes need to be made to promote continued improvement and success.

Collaborative teams dedicated to improving court practices and outcomes for children and families involved in child abuse and neglect cases tend to be most successful when they:

- Are comprised of a diverse group of stakeholders and agency leaders. Team members could include one or more judicial officers, attorneys (agency attorneys, parents' attorneys, children's attorneys or child advocates such as

CQI SELF-ASSESSMENT (STEP 1)

- Does your judicial district have an established CIC?
- Does the team include all the persons that should be involved?
 - If not, who is missing?
How can they be engaged?
- Does your CIC meet regularly?
- Are meetings productive uses of time?
 - If not, what can be done to improve them? (See suggested agenda on next page)
- Could you use some Technical Assistance on this issue?

Guardians Ad Litem (GALs) and/or Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs), social service professionals, and other influential community members. Collaborative teams also may include court staff and administrative personnel, educators or school representatives, treatment providers, data and IT system professionals, members of law enforcement, domestic violence advocates, and juvenile justice professionals. The makeup of your team should reflect the visions and objectives for systems change in your jurisdiction. For example, if you would like to improve outcomes for children and families concurrently involved in both juvenile dependency and delinquency systems, then the collaborative team should include juvenile justice professionals.

- Are motivated by a shared vision for systems

change. Each collaborative team should develop and agree upon an overarching vision and mission statement to guide their improvement efforts. The vision and mission for every team will differ, but should ultimately reflect shared organizational values.

- Communicate and convene on a regular basis. The most successful court improvement teams tend to hold in-person meetings on at least a bi-monthly basis so that they can discuss progress towards current goals and objectives, identify and develop solutions to any problems or obstacles, and share perspectives and new ideas. A basic sample agenda for a Community Improvement Council (CIC) Meeting is provided below.
- Utilize interdisciplinary expertise and connections. It is important to develop a team of diverse stakeholders so that team members can 1) Offer a variety of different

CIC MEETING AGENDA – JULY 8, 2015

3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

- **Welcome and Announcements**
- **Child Safety Guide Trainings**
 - Participant and presenter feedback
 - Volunteers to coordinate fall trainings
- **Presentation of results from Court User Surveys**
 - Discuss areas for improvement
- **Subcommittee updates**
 - Data subcommittee
 - Policy subcommittee
 - Leadership team
- **Plans for the next month and next steps**
- **Schedule next meeting**
- **Adjourn**

perspectives, experiences, and resources to help guide court improvement efforts; 2) Represent their organization or agency by sharing similar stakeholders' perspectives to help inform CQI processes; and 3) Discuss and coordinate court improvement team efforts with agency stakeholders.

- Clearly communicate and establish roles, responsibilities, and next steps for implementing and analyzing court improvement efforts. Court improvement teams operate most efficiently and effectively when necessary roles are established (e.g., team leaders, organizers, note takers/recorders, etc. and when specific individuals are identified as responsible for any given task related to planning or implementing a court improvement effort.

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL MEETING

- Schedule meetings at least one month in advance
- Draft and distribute agenda 1-2 weeks before each meeting – ask CIC members what needs to be included
- Identify a recorder to take minutes at each meeting and distribute to all CIC members within one week after the meeting
- Identify a facilitator for each meeting who will ensure the CIC stays on topic and that all members have a chance to speak

>> STEP 2:

CREATE, REVIEW, *and* REFINE a STRATEGIC PLAN *through a* CQI LENS

CQI involves analyzing the processes and outcomes of efforts made to achieve identified goals. Therefore, to fully integrate CQI principles into practice, Community Improvement Councils (CICs) must clearly articulate measurable goals and the plans for achieving these goals. This is commonly accomplished by developing a strategic plan or action plan for implementing and tracking change efforts. Although it would be optimal to begin CQI'ing a new program or practice, the reality is that integrating CQI often requires retrofitting this process to something that already exists. For instance, many CICs may have already identified system needs or areas for improvement and are working to address them, and CICs may already have created strategic plans. Whether your CIC is already executing a strategic plan or is beginning to develop one, it is important to view the strategic plan through a CQI lens. Strategic plans guiding the CQI process must, at minimum, include the following components:

- A clearly articulated, measurable goal linked to an identified need or improvement area
- Key steps or actions that must be taken to achieve the goal

CQI SELF-ASSESSMENT (STEP 2)

- Does your action plan have clearly articulated and measurable goals?
- Does your action plan include concrete steps with timelines and persons responsible?
- Do you have a plan to track progress?
- How will you know if your change effects the outcome you want?
- Could you use some technical assistance on this?

- How you will know if the key steps or actions needed to achieve the goal were implemented as planned
- How you will track progress towards the goal and determine whether the goal was achieved

It is also recommended that strategic plans identify 1) a timeline for program implementation and assessment of processes and outcomes; 2) specific persons or entities responsible for implementing key steps and/or actions; and 3) desired longer-term outcomes linked to achievement of the specified goal. For example, a CIC may set a goal of improving the quality of permanency hearings, and measure progress toward that goal by systematically assessing the breadth and depth of discussion surrounding key topics at permanency hearings. However, although improving the quality of permanency hearings is a measurable goal, it is still unclear *why* improving the quality of permanency hearings is important. Is improved hearing quality expected to increase

parties' satisfaction and acceptance of the case decisions, foster child well-being, or expedite permanency?

A sample strategic plan summarizing CIC activities and expected outcomes of increasing

focus on youth well-being at all juvenile dependency hearings is included in Appendix A. This sample plan will be used as an example throughout the remainder of this guide to help illustrate the CQI process.

>>> STEP 3: IDENTIFY PROCESS *and* OUTCOME MEASURES

Two main types of measures are used to help inform the CQI process.

Process measures document program activities and outputs, such as the number of participants reached by a training or the number of collaborative meetings held and the minutes of those meetings. Documenting and analyzing the processes of change initiatives will help CICs determine the extent to which programming was implemented as intended. In the sample strategic plan (see Appendix A), process measures would be developed from **Column D** (Evidence to be collected to indicate that the action has been implemented as planned). Process measures are important for several reasons. If the programming results in positive outcomes, process measures can help illustrate *how* the programming led to change and which elements of the program were successful. This information can then be used to develop a “road map for success” that can be disseminated and adopted by other CICs to promote broader change. If the

CQI SELF-ASSESSMENT (STEP 3)

- Do you understand how process outcome measures can be used to help guide CIC efforts?
- Do you have a plan to track process measures (e.g., if your change has been implemented as it was supposed to be)?
- Do you have a plan to track outcome measures (e.g., if your change has the desired effect)?
- Could you use some technical assistance on this?

programming did not lead to the desired change, process measures can be examined to determine if any discrepancies between what was planned and what was actually implemented may have impeded change. CICs refine their strategic plans to address any barriers to program implementation and/or to incorporate alternative actions that may be better suited to achieving their goals.

Outcome measures assess the extent to which programming led to desired changes are needed to answer the question, “Did our efforts make a difference?” The content of **Column E** (Evidence to be collected to indicate that the action has led to change) in the sample strategic plan can


be translated into outcome measures. Outcome measures are essential in tracking progress towards goals and in demonstrating how more immediate impacts of programming are linked to broader impacts in the following months or years. CICs should articulate and measure both short- and long-term outcomes of their change efforts. In the sample strategic plan, *Increased presence of youth at all hearings* represents an anticipated short-term outcome of change efforts, whereas *Increase in positive well-being outcomes for youth involved in dependency cases* represents a long-term outcome.

Measuring processes is sometimes more straightforward and less time-intensive than measuring outcomes, although this still requires time and dedication from CICs. For instance, the CIC working on the sample action plan will need

to collect data on the number and disciplines of participants attending trainings and conduct evaluations of the trainings (i.e. to assess the impacts of the training on participants' knowledge and intentions to apply this knowledge in their work). The CIC team also will need to collect data to determine if there has been an increase in positive well-being outcomes for youth involved in dependency cases. In doing so, the team will first need to identify measures of youth well-being they wish to use. Educational success, increased community involvement, developing positive peer relationships, and abstinence from drugs and alcohol are just some indicators of youth well-being. Next, the CIC team will determine how to collect the data needed for those measures.

>>>> STEP 4:

IDENTIFY WAYS *to* COLLECT (OR FIND EXISTING) DATA



In the next step in the CQI process, the CIC team will identify ways to collect the data needed for the processes and outcomes they wish to track. This should include conversations with all system stakeholders to assess the availability of data elements through various IT systems. The agency and the court will likely have data systems in place and collect some data that would be useful in tracking progress towards CIC goals and

CQI SELF-ASSESSMENT (STEP 4)

- Do you know what data are available to you?
- Do you know what data you need to collect?
- Do you have internal capacity to collect additional data?
- Could you use some technical assistance on this?

objectives. Further, the agency reports their data to the Adoption and Foster Care Reporting System (AFCARS), which will provide state level data (and sometimes jurisdiction specific data). Local school districts and juvenile justice agencies may also have data systems that include data elements that will help inform CIC efforts.

In Nevada, CICs have access to court timeliness data collected from the child welfare data in the SACWIS, UNITY, and in the SACWIS and UNITY systems, which are distributed to the courts quarterly. These data include the median days to permanency hearings, to termination of parental rights, and to permanency.

CICs also have access to agency data collected by Chapin Hall¹, including data on placement stability, case closure/exit type (i.e., whether a case ended in reunification, TPR/adoption, guardianship, etc.), and case timeliness (i.e., number of days from petition filing to permanency and case closure). This data is provided annually at the CIC annual meeting. Other data can be requested from NCJFCJ, who has access to the Chapin Hall data system. Also, it may be possible for the CICs to designate a person to gain access to Chapin Hall for additional information.

If data are not already available, it will be important to design a plan to collect data. This may include the collection of quantitative or

qualitative data. Quantitative data involves collecting numeric information from various primary sources (e.g., court records or stakeholder surveys) or secondary sources (e.g., school data or agency data). Qualitative data focus on descriptive information rather than numbers and provide a richer, more detailed description. Such data can be collected through parent or stakeholder interviews or focus groups, as well as through open-ended survey questions. The information collected can be used to better understand stakeholders' and users' perceptions about how well the program is working and how to improve programs.

CICs may discover that there are several different sources of data and data collection methods they can use to track processes and outcomes, and choose the source and method that is most efficient and relevant to their goals. If a CIC determines that data required to measure specific processes or outcomes are truly unavailable, the CIC should consider revising the desired process or outcome so that it is measurable.

¹ For more information about Chapin Hall, see:
<http://www.chapinhall.org/partners/CSCWD>

>>>>> STEP 5:

DETERMINE HOW *to* COLLECT OTHER NECESSARY DATA (COLLECTING YOUR OWN DATA)

After CICs determine what data they will need to collect in order to measure processes and outcomes, they should then articulate *how* these data will be collected. For primary data collection (that is, quantitative or qualitative data that CIC members will be requesting or collecting themselves), this should include details about what method should be used (e.g., online surveys, paper surveys, case file review, court observation), who will be responsible for collecting the data, and how data will be combined, stored, and analyzed. CICs, or the CIC data/performance measurement subcommittee groups also will need to determine who is responsible for entering, analyzing, and reporting data; how data will be reported; and if any data sharing agreements or Memorandums of Understanding need to be in place to obtain the data needed to measure performance.

It is recommended that all CICs create a performance measurement plan identifying process and outcome measures to track progress towards their overarching goal(s) and how these data will be collected and analyzed. A comprehensive sample performance measurement plan based on the sample strategic plan (Appendix A) is included in Appendix B. This example measurement plan includes

CQI SELF-ASSESSMENT (STEP 5)

- Are you familiar with different methods to collect your own data (e.g., surveys, case file review, court observation)?
- Do you know which methods would be best-suited to measuring your processes and outcomes?
- Do you have a clear plan for collecting, analyzing, and reporting your data?
- Could you use some technical assistance on this?

measures and procedures to track all processes and outcomes identified in the sample strategic plan for demonstration purposes (i.e., to provide CIC members with several different examples).

It is important to note that many CIC strategic plans and performance measurement plans may be briefer than the examples provided. Given limitations on time and resources, a CIC may decide to implement two activities aimed at promoting systems change and identify 2-4 process measures and 2-3 outcome measures. The process and outcome measures selected should be directly linked to the programming and/or activities. For example, a CIC may direct their efforts towards implementation of the following **practices** (adapted from Appendix A):

All judicial officers will inquire about youth availability to attend hearings and the judicial officers and clerks will make every effort to schedule hearings so that youth can attend.

The CIC will organize multi-disciplinary trainings on best practices for engaging youth during juvenile dependency hearings and the key topics related to youth permanency and well-being that should be discussed at hearings.

The CIC team then identifies the following **process measures** they will use to determine whether these activities were implemented as planned:

- Frequency with which judicial officers inquire about youth schedules when scheduling the next hearing.
- Frequency with which hearings are scheduled that accommodate youth.
- Number of staff trained and disciplines of staff trained.
- Participants' satisfaction with training and knowledge gained

Next, the CIC team identifies the following two measures to determine if the activities are leading to the anticipated **outcomes**:

Frequency with which youth attend their court hearings.

Breadth and depth of discussion focused on child well-being during hearings.

After the programming has been implemented for some time and data have been collected for the identified process and outcome measures, the CIC may consider exploring more long-term outcomes expected to result from their efforts. For instance, increased attendance of youth at hearings and increased quality of discussion focused on child well-being at these hearings may be in turn expected to improve readiness for living independently among youth who are aging out of care. This outcome can be measured by completing an Independent Living Readiness Checklist for each youth as applicable. Appendix B includes examples of potential data collection sources and methods and measurement plans for each of the measures identified above.


Some CICs may want to begin by implementing a simplified data collection and performance measurement plan. Such a plan should include 1) CIC activities that are being implemented; 2) One or more measures for each activity; and 3) The method that will be used to collect data for the measure. The table on the following pages provides examples of simplified data collection and performance measurement plans using many of the activities that CICs identified in their Action Plans for 2014-2015 (completed at the 2014 Nevada CIC Summit).

PROPOSED CIC ACTIVITIES AND EXAMPLE DATA COLLECTION METHODS		
ACTION	MEASURE(S)	DATA COLLECTION METHOD
Monthly case review meetings with DCFS, PD, DA, and CASA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequency of meetings (date and time) Frequency with which all specified professionals attend 	Identify a recorder and keep minutes for each meeting. Record the date of each meeting and persons present. Save meeting minutes as word or other electronic document.
Improve engagement of parents and during hearings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses to Parent Engagement Survey <p>NOTE: Please see Appendix C for a sample Parent Engagement Survey.</p>	At the end of each hearing, the Bailiff will ask the parent(s) if they would be willing to take the survey and provide instructions. All completed surveys will be dropped in a locked box in the back of the courtroom
Increase the number of case plans that are filed in a timely manner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of case plans that are filed within the specified timeframe 	All social services staff responsible for filing case plans will record the date each case plan is <i>supposed</i> to be filed by and the date each case is actually filed in a simple Excel template. They will send completed templates for each month to administrators.
Increase focus on child well-being at all hearings as appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of well-being topics discussed at each hearing; extent to which each topic is discussed (e.g., brief mention or thorough discussion) 	Designated CIC members or other trained volunteers will randomly observe hearings and collect data using a Court Observation Tool that includes child well-being discussion topics. NOTE: Please see Appendix D for a sample Court Observation Tool.
Expanding and improving petitions and case plans to be rationally related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degree of correspondence between allegations and presenting problems noted in the petition and case plans 	Examine petitions and case plans side-by-side. For each petition/case plan pair selected, use a table to record the number of instances in which case plan services were <i>not</i> related to petition allegations or presenting problems.
Confirm ICWA status at each hearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of hearings during which the judicial officer inquires about ICWA (asks if child has Native American heritage and if ICWA applies) 	CIC members, trained volunteers, or ICWA compliance officers will randomly attend hearings and record whether ICWA status was confirmed using a court observation instrument. NOTE: Please see Appendix E for a sample ICWA Compliance – Court Observation Tool

PROPOSED CIC ACTIVITIES AND EXAMPLE DATA COLLECTION METHODS		
ACTION	MEASURE(S)	DATA COLLECTION METHOD
Invite children to attend court (with prior notification of team members)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of hearings that youth attend 	Pull random samples of electronic case files and record whether the child was present for each hearing in the case in an Excel spreadsheet (e.g., Adjudication present? Y/N).
Promote attendance of foster parents at hearings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of hearings for which foster parents are present 	Judicial officers and/or court staff will ensure that foster parents are identified and entered into the court case management system as present. Random samples of hearings can then be selected within the system to determine the extent to which foster parents appear.
Recruitment and retention of quality foster parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of licensed foster care providers in the jurisdiction. 	Social Services will send the CIC quarterly reports (pulled from their case management system) with the present numbers of licensed foster care providers
Recruitment and retention of quality foster parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of licensed foster care providers in the jurisdiction. 	Social Services will send the CIC quarterly reports (pulled from their case management system) with the present numbers of licensed foster care providers
Increase focus on child safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of safety issues addressed during the initial hearing and extent to which these issues were addressed (Per the Child Safety Guide) 	<p>CIC members or trained volunteers will randomly observe initial hearings (i.e., Shelter Care, Preliminary Protective Hearings) and complete a checklist of child safety topics that should be discussed as recommended per the Child Safety Guide.</p> <p>NOTE: Please see Appendix F for a sample Initial Hearing Observation – Child Safety Checklist</p>

>>>>>> STEP 6:

ANALYZE YOUR DATA *and* REACT to YOUR FINDINGS



In developing a performance measurement plan, CICs should specify how the data collected or obtained will be analyzed, the timeframe and/or frequency with which the data will be analyzed (e.g., six months after program implementation and every six months following) and who will be responsible for analyzing the data and reporting the findings to the CIC and other stakeholders. After the findings are shared, the CIC enters in perhaps the most important phase of CQI: reacting to the findings. This is what distinguishes CQI from other methods of tracking processes, progress, and impacts. Rather than simply reporting their findings and moving on, CICs engaged in the CQI process carefully consider the results obtained, identify successes and areas for improvement, and begin

CQI SELF-ASSESSMENT (STEP 6)

- What did the data tell you about your change?
- Was the change implemented like it was supposed to?
- Were there barriers to implementation?
- Can something be done differently to improve implementation?
- Should you continue with the change or stop?
- Were you able to illustrate a positive outcome following the change?
- Could you use some technical assistance on this?

to develop plans for further improvement. These plans may include maintaining and expanding programs that have led to successes, modifying programming that has fallen short of expectations, and/or implementing new programs and activities that may be more conducive to achieving the desired outcomes.



SEEK TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE *as* NEEDED

The Nevada Court Improvement Program contracts with the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) to provide technical assistance related to CQI of current statewide and local projects. The research team at the NCJFCJ is available to assist the CICs in thinking about how to integrate CQI more fully into current practice. Technical assistance can take many forms, depending on the needs of the court. These may include:

- **Identification of performance measures.** In developing an action plan, the CICs often identify practice or program changes they would like to make. The NCJFCJ can help identify performance measures to correspond to those suggested changes. For example, if you want to increase involvement of children, families, and other necessary parties, the NCJFCJ can help you identify multiple ways you might want to measure this to determine if your change is occurring as planned.
- **Assistance with tool development.** Often it might be necessary to develop an instrument to collect all the necessary components you would like to see. For example, an action plan might be to better engage parents in the process. The CIC may want to survey parents about current engagement and barriers to coming to court.

The NCJFCJ can help the CIC develop a user-friendly tool to use in data collection.

- **Answering data questions.** Data can be tricky and always has some limitations. The NCJFCJ can help answer any questions you have about the currently available data, its limitations, and how it can best be used.
- **Analysis of currently available data.** The NCJFCJ could also serve as a data analysis partner. In addition to having access to AFCARS and Chapin Hall data, the NCJFCJ could potentially help with analysis of data the CIC has collected (e.g., analyzing survey responses, doing analysis of data collected in excel, etc.)
- **Brainstorming ideas for data collection.** The NCJFCJ can serve as a thought partner, working with the CIC to consider all potential data sources and ways to efficiently and effectively collect data needed to monitor change and assess outcomes.
- **Assistance with action planning.** The NCJFCJ can also assist in the action planning process, helping to identify process measures, as well as short term and long-term outcomes measures of interest.

Appendix A – Sample Strategic Plan

Goal: Increase focus on child well-being at all hearings in juvenile dependency cases.

A. Description of action to bring about change or improvement	B. Specific entities or persons responsible for the action and timeframe	C. Materials and resources needed for action	D. Evidence to be collected to indicate that the action has been implemented as planned	E. Evidence to be collected to indicate that the action has led to change
<p>Inform all relevant parties (e.g., parents, foster parents, child advocates, youth) that the court encourages youth attendance at hearings and provide one-page information sheets about youth attendance along with the next hearing date to parties</p>	<p>CIT representatives from each agency (Lead Judge, social worker, attorneys) will train other staff on protocol. Youth in Court subcommittee will draft and supply information sheets. Completion date: Oct. 2015</p>	<p>Youth in Court (YIC) protocol and guidelines, information sheets</p>	<p>Parties' awareness of expectations that youth are present in court; number of staff trained; extent of YIC information sharing and distribution.</p>	<p>Increased youth presence at all hearings Increased engagement of youth who are present at hearings</p>
<p>Inquire about youth availability to attend hearings and schedule hearings accordingly</p>	<p>Lead Judge will train judicial officers and court clerks to accommodate youth schedules Completion date: Sept. 2015</p>	<p>Reminder notices, youth schedules.</p>	<p>Extent of inquiries and hearings scheduled that accommodate youth</p>	<p>Increased depth and breadth of discussion focused on child well-being at all hearings</p>
<p>Multi-disciplinary trainings on best practices for engaging youth and key hearing discussion topics</p>	<p>Representatives from the DA, Public Defender, and GAL office will coordinate trainings, to be held in Aug. and Sept. 2015</p>	<p>Training curriculum, presenters, and educational materials</p>	<p>Number and discipline of participants attending training, training evaluations</p>	<p>Increased understanding and perceptions of procedural fairness among youth regarding their case</p>
<p>Monthly multi-disciplinary case reviews, with a focus on promoting child well-being</p>	<p>Social service agency representatives will coordinate meetings, beginning Sept. 2015</p>	<p>Case and child information from each agency; staff participation</p>	<p>Number and frequency of meetings; topics discussed</p>	<p>Increase in positive well-being outcomes for youth involved in dependency cases</p>

Appendix B – Sample Data Collection and Performance Measurement Plan

Process Measures		
Measure	Data collection sources and methods	Measurement plan
Parties' awareness of expectations that youth are present in court	Prior to each hearing, court staff will ask all relevant parties (e.g., child advocates, parents/guardians/foster parents, attorneys, social workers) if they have received verbal and written information encouraging youth presence at hearings.	Designated staff will pose this question to all relevant parties prior to each court hearing and record their responses on a standardized form. Forms will be collected each week by designated court staff and results analyzed on a monthly basis.
Number of staff trained and disciplines of staff trained	All participants who attend trainings will be asked to provide their name and discipline on a sign-in sheet	CIT representatives will collect sign-in sheets and enter participants' names and disciplines into an Excel file.
Participants' satisfaction with training and knowledge gained	Data will be collected using a post-reflective evaluation survey distributed to participants at the end of each training. The survey will ask participants to indicate their satisfaction with the training and to rate their knowledge in the topics covered before and after the training.	CIT representatives will collect evaluation surveys at the end of each training and enter data into an Excel file. CIT representatives can calculate response frequencies and averages using Excel to assess overall satisfaction with the training and to determine the extent of knowledge increase from pre to post training.
Frequency with which YIC information sheets are distributed to all relevant parties	A CIT member will observe of 2-3 hearings per week (including different judicial officers) for the first two months of program implementation to determine whether information sheets are distributed as planned.	The CIT member will record whether the information sheet was distributed to all, some, or none of the relevant parties for each hearing observed and enter this information into an Excel file. These data will be analyzed after three months into the implementation phase to assess fidelity to distribution of the information sheets.
Frequency with which judicial officers inquire about youth schedules when scheduling the next hearing and the frequency with which hearings are scheduled that accommodate youth.	A CIT member will observe of 2-3 hearings per week (including different judicial officers) for the first two months of program implementation to determine whether judicial officers are inquiring about youth schedules and, if so, whether hearings are scheduled to accommodate youth.	The CIT member will record whether the judicial officer did or did not inquire about youth schedules when scheduling the next hearing and whether the hearing was in fact scheduled to accommodate youth. This information will be entered into an Excel file. These data will be analyzed after three months into the implementation phase to determine the extent to which judicial officers are making efforts to accommodate youth schedules.
Frequency of multi-disciplinary case review meetings and discussion of topics focused on child well-being	Social services representative will document meetings and complete a "checklist" of discussion topics, marking all topics discussed related to child well-being (e.g., placement, mental and physical health, visitation, education)	The social services representative will enter data collected at meetings into a shared Excel file. Data will be analyzed on a bi-monthly basis to assess the extent to which meetings are held and child well-being topics are discussed.

Appendix B – Sample Data Collection and Performance Measurement Plan

Outcome Measures		
Measure	Data collection sources and methods	Measurement plan
Youth presence at hearings	Presence of parties at each hearing is already documented in the court case management system.	Court IT staff will randomly select 30 cases closed prior to program implementation and calculate the percentage of hearings for which youth were present for each case. A year after program implementation, IT staff will randomly select 30 cases that opened after program implementation and calculate the percentage of hearings for which youth were present for each case. These pre and post percentages can be compared to assess the extent to which youth presence at hearings have increased as a result of CIT efforts.
Judicial engagement of youth during hearings	Designated CIT members will observe at least 5 juvenile dependency hearings per month for which youth are present beginning now (to establish a baseline) and continuing throughout the following months during and after program implementation. CIT observers will use a standardized court observation instrument to assess the extent and quality of judicial engagement.	Each CIT observer or support staff (e.g., interns, student volunteers) will enter the data collected via the observation instruments into an Excel file. Means (averages) will be calculated for each engagement variable as well as total engagement scores. These will be compared across months to assess improvements in judicial engagement of youth.
Breadth and depth of discussion focused on child well-being during hearings.	Designated CIT members will observe at least 5 juvenile dependency hearings per month for which youth are present beginning now (to establish a baseline) and continuing throughout the following months during and after program implementation. CIT observers will use a standardized court observation instrument to assess the breadth and depth of key discussion topics as set forth in the <i>Resource Guidelines</i> (e.g., placement, education, health, permanent connections, etc.)	Each CIT observer or support staff (e.g., interns, student volunteers) will enter the data collected via the observation instruments into an Excel file. Means will be calculated for each discussion topic variable as well as total "hearing quality" pertaining to child well-being scores. These will be compared across months to assess improvements in the breadth and depth of discussion focused on child well-being.
Youths' perceptions of procedural fairness regarding their court hearings and case.	At the end of hearings, Bailiffs will administer a survey to youth who attended assessing their perceptions related to procedural fairness- e.g., whether they felt the way their case was handled was fair and if the hearing outcome was fair, whether they had the opportunity to be heard, whether the judge listened to their side of the story. This will occur at each hearing beginning immediately and throughout the months during and following program implementation.	CIT volunteers or support staff will enter survey results into an Excel database. Response frequencies and means will be examined and compared over time to determine if there are increases in youth's perceptions of procedural fairness.

Appendix B – Sample Data Collection and Performance Measurement Plan

Outcome Measures		
Measure	Data collection sources and methods	Measurement plan
Educational Benchmarks: Percentage of youth performing at or above grade level at case closure. (well-being measure)	Upon case closure, the Educational Liaison will submit updated academic records to social services and indicate if the student is performing at or above grade level.	An additional field for “academic performance at case closure” will be added to the Agency database with codes to indicate whether youth are performing below, at, or above grade level. These data will be analyzed every six months to determine if youth academic performance has improved.
Dual Involvement: Percentage of children under court jurisdiction who are also involved in the juvenile delinquency system. (well-being measure)	Juvenile Services already tracks dual involvement-youth who have open dependency and delinquency cases. Youth who are dually involved are flagged in their data system. The court case management system tracks the total number of youth under court jurisdiction (in child welfare cases).	Juvenile Services staff will run quarterly reports indicating the number of youth who are dually involved-the percentage of youth with open dependency cases who are dually involved can then be calculated by court IT staff. These data will be analyzed quarterly to assess changes in the extent of dual involvement.
Independent Living Readiness (well-being measure)	Social workers will complete the independent living readiness checklist for all APPLA youth 2-3 months prior to their eighteenth birthday or discharge from care. The checklist includes variables related to education, employment, housing, and independent living skills.	Data from the independent living readiness checklist will be entered into the Agency database. Every six months, the CIT social services representative will request a report on the checklists completed during the six month time period. Checklist scores will be compared over time to detect changes in Independent Living Readiness among APPLA youth.

Appendix C - Parent Engagement Survey

We are interested in your opinion of how you were treated in court today. Your answers to these questions can be used to help improve the court system. Your answers will only be used to measure the court's strengths and weaknesses and will not affect your case in any way. We appreciate you taking the time to complete this survey.

When did your case open? _____ month _____ year

Please indicate your agreement with each statement, using the following scale.

1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neutral 4=Agree 5=Strongly Agree

The judge treated me with respect	1	2	3	4	5	
The judge listened to me	1	2	3	4	5	
I had a chance to speak	1	2	3	4	5	
The judge spoke directly to me	1	2	3	4	5	
I helped make the decisions for my case.....	1	2	3	4	5	
I agreed with the case plan ordered for me	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
I understood what happened in court today.....	1	2	3	4	5	
I understand what I am supposed to do next.....	1	2	3	4	5	
All of my questions were answered	1	2	3	4	5	
The judge was fair.....	1	2	3	4	5	
I agree with the decisions made in court today	1	2	3	4	5	

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience in court today? _____

Please check your role in the case: Mother Father

Please check your race/ethnicity (mark all that apply):

- White/Caucasian Black/African American Hispanic/Latino
 Asian/Pacific Islander Native American Other: _____

Appendix D – Example Court Observation Tool²

The following is an excerpt from a court observation tool used to assess hearing practice in review hearings. The top portion gathers descriptive data regarding when the hearing was held, who was present, the scheduled start and end time, as well as the child’s current placement. The bottom portion focuses just on what was discussed at the hearing.

Date			Inquiry about parties not present? Who? _____ (N Y NA)		Site
MONTH	DAY	YEAR	Explanation from agency to locate missing parties? (N Y NA)		Scheduled Time: <input style="width: 100px;" type="text"/>
(J) J					Start Time: <input style="width: 100px;" type="text"/>
(F) F					End Time: <input style="width: 100px;" type="text"/>
(M) M	(0) (0)	(0) (0)	Parties Present/ Spoke at Hearing		Current Placement (1) Home (2) Relative/Kin (3) Pre-Adoptive Home (4) Foster Care (5) Group Home (6) Treatment Facility (7) UD
(A) A	(1) (1)	(1) (1)	(Y) (S) Judge	(Y) (S) Treatment Provider	
(A) A	(1) (1)	(1) (1)	(Y) (S) Child(ren)	(Y) (S) State's Atty	
(M) M	(2) (2)	(2) (2)	(Y) (S) Caseworker	(Y) (S) Agency Atty	
(J) J	(3) (3)	(3) (3)	(Y) (S) Attorney <i>ad litem</i>	(Y) (S) Mother	
(J) J	(4) (4)	(4) (4)	(Y) (S) GAL	(Y) (S) Father	
(A) A	(5) (5)	(5) (5)	(Y) (S) CASA	(Y) (S) Mother Atty	
(S) S	(6) (6)	(6) (6)	(Y) (S) Foster Parent	(Y) (S) Father Atty	
(O) O	(7) (7)	(7) (7)	(Y) (S) Relative Caretaker	(Y) (S) Other: _____	
(N) N	(8) (8)	(8) (8)	(Y) (S) Extended Family	(Y) (S) Other: _____	
(D) D	(9) (9)	(9) (9)			

For each of the discussion items below, use the 0 to 2 scale to identify how much discussion occurred in the hearing. 0 = No discussion, 1=statement only/little discussion, 2=more than a statement/substantive discussion.

Well-Being

Educational needs being met	(0) (1) (2) (NA)
Educational placement appropriate	(0) (1) (2) (NA)
Physical well-being	(0) (1) (2) (NA)
Mental health needs	(0) (1) (2) (NA)
Special needs	(0) (1) (2) (NA)
Independent Living Plan	(0) (1) (2) (NA)

² More information about this tool and measuring ICWA compliance generally can be found in the Measuring Compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act: An Assessment Toolkit, Available online at: <http://www.ncjfcj.org/resource-library/publications/measuring-compliance-indi-an-child-welfare-act-assessment-toolkit>

Appendix E – ICWA Compliance Tool²

NCJFCJ ICWA Performance Measurement Court Observation Tool						
Court Case File Number	Type of Hearing	Coder	Tribe(s) of Child		Date	
Judicial Officer	County/Jurisdiction	State	Num of children	# child selected:	M	O
Parties Present at Hearing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mother <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mother's Atty <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Child <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Relatives <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interpreter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Foster Parent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Father <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Father's Atty <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social worker <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Child's Atty <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tribal Representative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CASA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Treatment Prov <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State's Atty <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Atty for Tribe <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other:						
Was an attorney appointed at this hearing for: the mother? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> the father? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> the child? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>						
ICWA Applicability						
1. Application of ICWA						Yes No
1a. Did the judge inquire about the applicability of ICWA?						<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Who was asked? _____						
1b. Has the child's tribe(s) been identified?						<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
1c. Is the child a member, or eligible for membership of a federally recognized tribe?						<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
1d. Did the judge make a finding orally on the record that ICWA does/does not apply?						<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
1e. Does ICWA apply in this case? (even if no finding)						<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
2. Jurisdiction						Yes No
2a. Did the judge make a finding <i>on the record</i> that the tribe(s) received formal notice of petition filing?						<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
2b. Is the child a ward of a tribal court?						<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
2c. Is the child domiciled or living on the reservation?						<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
2d. Does the state court have jurisdiction?						<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
***If this is not the initial hearing, is there indication that this is an ICWA case? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>						
ICWA Compliance						Yes No
3. Findings on the Record & Placement					Finding Made	Notice Given
3a. Did the judge make a finding that the tribe(s) received notice of this hearing?					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3b. Did the judge make a finding that the mother received notice of this hearing?					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3c. Did the judge make a finding that the father received notice of this hearing?					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3d. Did the judge make a finding that the Indian custodian received notice of this hearing?					<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3e. Did the judge order the child in to (or to remain in) out of home placement?					<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3f. Did the judge make a finding that emergency removal was necessary to prevent imminent physical damage or harm to the child?					<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3g. Was there qualified expert witness testimony presented at this hearing?					<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3h. Did the judge make a finding that there was clear and convincing evidence that the child was likely to suffer serious emotional or physical damage if continued in the custody of the parent?					<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3i. Did the judge make a finding of active efforts <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> to prevent removal? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> to return the child home?					<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3j. Was there discussion of why child was not placed with relatives?					<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3k. Did the judge make a finding of good cause not to follow the placement preferences? If yes, why? _____					<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
4. Tribal Intervention						Yes No
4a. Did the tribe petition or move to intervene in the case?						<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
4b. Did the judge grant the tribe's petition or motion to intervene in the case?						<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
4c. Did the tribe have a recommendation to present to the court?						<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
4d. Did the judge allow the tribe to present its recommendation to the court?						<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
4e. Did the judge adopt all <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> adopt some <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> or not adopt <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> the tribe's recommendation?						<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
5. Transfer to Tribal Court						Yes No
5a. Did a party request a transfer of the case to tribal court at this hearing?						<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
5b. Did the judge make a decision about the transfer to tribal court? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Grant <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deny <input type="checkbox"/>						<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
5c. Did the judge make a finding of good cause to deny the request to transfer the case? If yes, why? _____						<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
6. Engagement of Tribe						Yes No
6a. Was there discussion of how the tribe has been involved in case planning?						<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
6b. Was there discussion of culturally appropriate services for the family?						<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
6c. Was there discussion of how the tribe has been involved in locating relatives?						<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Child Placement Order: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New order <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continuation Is this an adoptive home? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>						
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Home/Parent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Indian Home <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Treatment Facility <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Relative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Indian Home <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unable to Determine <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tribal Home <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Group Home						

² More information about this tool and measuring ICWA compliance generally can be found in the *Measuring Compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act: An Assessment Toolkit*, Available online at: <http://www.ncjfcj.org/resource-library/publications/measuring-compliance-indian-child-welfare-act-assessment-toolkit>

Appendix F --Sample Child Safety Initial Hearing Checklist

Date: _____ Coder: R L Sched. Start Time: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

PARTIES PRESENT:

- Mother
- Father
- Child(ren)
- Child Advocate A G C
- Foster Parent
- Relative: _____
- Tribal Rep
- Other: _____

ICWA Finding? Yes No

CHILD DISCUSSION TOPICS:

- Child Placement H R FC (0 1 2)
- Child education- general N/A (0 1 2)
- Child educational placement N/A (0 1 2)
- Child physical health (0 1 2)
- Child mental health (0 1 2)
- Child other well-being (0 1 2)
- Child safety** (0 1 2)
- Visitation P S (0 1 2)
- Efforts to reunify/prevent removal (0 1 2)

INITIAL HEARING DISCUSSION TOPICS:

- Parents' rights (0 1 2)
- Permanency timeframes (0 1 2)
- Review of the petition (0 1 2)
- Paternity (0 1 2)
- Diligent search (0 1 2)
- Relative resource (0 1 2)
- Safety planning** (0 1 2)
- Prevent child from returning home today? (0 1 2)
- Judge ask about Native American heritage? (0 1 2)

ENGAGEMENT:

- Overall Mother engagement N/A (0 1 2)
- Overall Father engagement N/A (0 1 2)
- Overall Child engagement N/A (0 1 2)

SERVICES:

- Mother N/A (0 1 2)
- Father N/A (0 1 2)

SAFETY TOPICS:

- Threats of Danger** (0 1 2)
- Present threats identified? Y N
- Impeding threats identified? Y N
- If identified, were threats considered in:**
- Placement? Y N Safety plan? Y N
- Visitation plan? Y N Service plan? Y N

Threats of Danger:

- Vulnerability** (0 1 2)
- Vulnerabilities identified? Y N
- If identified, were threats considered in:**
- Placement? Y N Safety plan? Y N
- Visitation plan? Y N Service plan? Y N

Vulnerabilities:

- Protective Capacities** (0 1 2)
- Cognitive capacities identified? Y N
- Behavioral capacities identified? Y N
- Emotional capacities identified? Y N

- If identified, were protective capacities considered in:**
- Placement? Y N Safety plan? Y N
- Visitation plan? Y N Service plan? Y N


Protective Capacities:

Note



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Assessing Mediation
in Washoe County,
NV and Outcome
Evaluation of
Mediation in Washoe
County, NV

2013

RESEARCH REPORT
ASSESSING MEDIATION IN WASHOE COUNTY,
NEVADA



National Council of Juvenile and
Family Court Judges

Juvenile Law Programs

June 24, 2013

The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges® (NCJFCJ) headquartered on the University of Nevada campus in Reno since 1969, provides cutting-edge training, wide-ranging technical assistance, and research to help the nation's courts, judges, and staff in their important work. Since its founding in 1937 by a group of judges dedicated to improving the effectiveness of the nation's juvenile courts, the NCJFCJ has pursued a mission to improve courts and systems practice and raise awareness of the core issues that touch the lives of many of our nation's children and families.

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Executive Summary

Washoe County Mediation

In late 2011, the Second Judicial District of Nevada (Washoe County) implemented a mediation program for parents and stakeholders who are in the midst of the child abuse and neglect court system. The goal of mediation is to avoid further litigation through voluntary case resolution, which can enhance case processing and improve outcomes in juvenile dependency cases. Parties can come together in a neutral setting to address the issues surrounding the case and what options are available given the status of the case, through the assistance of an impartial third-party.

The Nevada Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) contracted the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) to conduct an assessment of the juvenile dependency mediation program. The assessment included a process evaluation, a satisfaction evaluation, and an outcome evaluation. As part of these evaluations, the NCJFCJ reviewed satisfaction surveys completed by parents and stakeholders at the conclusion of the mediation session, surveyed stakeholders about the implementation process, conducted key-informant interviews, and reviewed cases files to examine timeliness and case outcomes. Surveys and interviews were analyzed to examine common themes, level of satisfaction with the current mediation practice, and areas of improvements suggested.

Key Findings

Key findings from the *process* evaluation included:

- *General perception that mediation is successful;*
- *Perceived decreased workload for stakeholder;*
- *Need for ongoing education and outreach of system stakeholders; and*
- *Problem with “no-show” parents.*

Key findings from the *satisfaction* survey included:

- *The majority of mediations (78%) result in agreement, but parties do not also have consensus as to the actual agreement level;*
- *Mediation creates an environment where parents felt heard, respected, and treated fairly during the process; and*
- *Mediators clearly explaining the process and parents being part of the decision-making both predicted agreement in mediations.*

Key findings from the *outcome* evaluation included:

- *Mediated cases had fewer default orders for mothers and fathers;*
- *Mediated cases were related to longer time for case outcomes for mothers but no difference for fathers;*
- *An association between mediation and an increased number of continuances; and*
- *An association between mediation and vacated settlement conferences and trials.*

Based on these findings, the following lessons learned and recommendations emerged.

Implementation Lessons Learned

1. *Education & Outreach Are Important.* Program startup should include education and outreach to all stakeholders who may/should be involved in the mediation.
2. *Buy-In From All Stakeholders Will Help Encourage Mediations.* Even if project partners are educated about the benefits of mediation, mediation may not be successful if key professional stakeholders do not believe the program is beneficial and useful.
3. *The Referral Process Makes a Difference.* Mediations were much less common when they were on a referral basis. Court ordered mediation increased the number of mediations and ensured stakeholder participation.
4. *Parent Education is Necessary.* Parents should learn about mediation prior to attending a mediation session. Protocols or practices should be developed to identify how to best educate parents about this process.

Recommendations for Improving Process & Next Steps

5. *Ensure All Parties Understand the Agreement.* Satisfaction surveys revealed that the parties involved did not always have the same perception of the level of agreement that was reached. It is important that *all* persons understand whether full agreement was reached. In particular, this is important for parents, to ensure that they know what occurred at the mediation and what the next steps are in the case.
6. *Ongoing Education & Outreach.* Education and outreach should not stop with implementation. Continuing education and outreach efforts will ensure that new stakeholders are familiar with the program. One potential outlet in Washoe for this continued education may be the Model Court collaborative meetings that occur monthly.
7. *Consistent Domestic Violence Screening & Treatment.* There did not seem to be consistency among mediators as to how the cases were screened, or how they treated cases when domestic violence did occur. At a minimum, all cases should be screened using a standard tool (across mediators), where parents are directly asked.
8. *Decrease No-Show Rate.* If parents do not show up for mediation, the mediation cannot occur. Consider making mediation information available (such as the mediation brochure) to parents when they are at court hearings.
9. *Identify Areas for Improved Efficiency.* A few stakeholders mentioned that mediation is too lengthy. System participants should consider what other efficiency strategies may help with this process.
10. *Share Results.* A summary of the mediation reports might be useful to share with system stakeholders in order to increase buy-in and to demonstrate the positive results of mediation. At a minimum, identifying the number of the mediations held, the agreement rate, and the percentage of time mediation results in vacated hearings would be interesting to stakeholders and could help with outreach and buy-in of other stakeholders in the process.

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Introduction

When a child is removed from a home by child protective services (CPS), this child has entered the child dependency system where an adversarial relationship between parents and CPS may develop. Distrust and confusion about the child dependency system can arise for parents and there is need for collaboration and resolution. Mediation is an option to avoid further litigation, which has been used for decades to catalyze case processing and improve outcomes in juvenile dependency cases.¹ This alternative dispute resolution practice is a method that brings together all concerned parties to negotiate and resolve issues with the assistance of a neutral third party (mediator). The main objective of mediation is to facilitate a discussion where parties voluntarily resolve the issues that brought a family into the dependency system and produce a written agreement, in lieu of a traumatic contested hearing.² The mediation can include parents, CPS, attorneys, and all others that may be involved in the case (e.g., guardian ad litem, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), foster parents, other family members, etc.).

The topics discussed depend largely on what issues are contested. If the mediation occurs pre-adjudication, topics may include petition allegations. Other contested issues that often arise and are discussed at mediation may include: case planning, custody, visitation, shared parental responsibility, temporary and long-term placement, foster care, relative placement, non-relative placement, shelter care, family dynamics, parent education, available services to families, family reunification, termination of parental rights, and/or adoption.³ Mediation should focus on the family's strengths, create an environment where parents are incorporated in decision making about their children, and prevent any further abuse or neglect for the child.² There are several potential benefits to mediation in child dependency cases which can include, but are not limited to: time savings, efficiency, parent engagement, and improved outcomes for children involved.

¹ Giovannucci, M., and Largent, K. (2009). A guide to effective child protection mediation: Lessons from 25 years of practice. *Family Court Review*, 47, 38-52.

² Superior Court of California, County of Alameda. *Dependency Mediation*. Retrieved from: <http://www.alameda.courts.ca.gov/Resources/Documents/Dependency%20Mediation.pdf>

³ Eighth Judicial Circuit of Florida. *Frequently Asked Questions: Juvenile Dependency*. Retrieved from: <http://circuit8.org/mediation/dependency-mediation>

Time-savings may occur for courts, attorneys, and social workers. This time-savings can produce a potential lightened workload through the avoidance of further litigation and the trial preparation.⁴ Although mediation can take up to three hours (in Washoe County), if resolution occurs, this can save the courts countless hours and provide more time for other cases to be processed. The mediation process is also advantageous because of parent engagement. A parent may come into mediation feeling angry, distrustful, and confused, but leave feeling empowered with a better understanding of the child welfare agency and the dependency process. Mediation is conducted by an experienced professional, in a confidential and respectful place.² Confidentiality can foster an environment where parents feel they can be honest because what they say will not be used against them in court. Because interested parties are at the table, resolution (either full or partial) can be quite common and this can result in faster case progression, and ultimately may result in shorter times to permanency for children and families.

Although there are benefits to mediation, it does come with limitations. These include no-show parents, disjointed buy-in from stakeholders, and lack of facilitation skills on the part of mediators. With careful evaluation of each court's mediation process, many of these limitations can be mitigated with improved outcomes for the dependency system. For this reason, it is important to assess mediation programs, both in terms of the process of mediation, determining if it is being implemented as expected, and the outcomes of evaluation in terms of how it may meet case goals.

Program Background

In August of 2011, the Second Judicial District of Nevada (Washoe County) established a juvenile dependency mediation program. Modeled after a mediation program that ran in the district in the early 2000s, the new program is funded by the Court Improvement Program (CIP), a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services program designed to support court initiatives related to improving outcomes for maltreated children involved in the court system.⁵ To secure the funding, the lead juvenile dependency judge in Washoe County worked with the state CIP Coordinator to identify mediation as a goal for the jurisdiction and apply for grant funds. Three mediators with years of experience mediating a

⁴ Summers, A., Wood, S. and Russell, J. (2011) Assessing Efficiency and Workload Implications of the King County Mediation Pilot. *OJJDP Journal of Juvenile Justice*, 1, 48-59. Retrieved from: <http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/King%20County%20Mediation%20Pilot%20Article.pdf>

⁵ Crowley, M. (2012). Dependency Mediation. *Nevada Family Law Review*, 25, 12-17.

variety of issues were recruited for the program, and the program is administered by staff of the Second Judicial District.

In Washoe County, juvenile dependency cases are automatically ordered to mediation by the court if there is a contested termination of parental rights (TPR) petition, contested permanency planning hearing, or other contested case issues. The date and time of the mediation session is set by the court, and formalized through a court order; participation by all parties to the case is mandatory. Three hours are set aside for each mediation session.

On the day of mediation, the mediator provides a mediation orientation for the parents and parties new to mediation. Recently, mediators have started staggering arrival times so that social workers and attorneys are not sitting idly in the waiting room. The mediators give each parent a brief overview of the mediation process and parents then sign a confidentiality statement. Additionally, all parties sign a confidentiality statement prior to the mediation.

Mediators in Washoe County use a facilitative model of mediation, a style of mediation that emphasizes the neutrality of the mediator. A facilitative mediator does not present his or her own views of the case or of the agreement, and is instead focused on ensuring that all parties have an opportunity to be heard and that parties reach an agreement that meets everyone's needs.⁶

At the conclusion of a mediation session, the mediators use a laptop to write the agreement while all parties are in the same room. The agreement is printed, signed by those who have authority to do so, and each party receives a copy. The agreement is then entered into the electronic case management system and forwarded to the judge, who has to then sign the agreement and file a court order. All participants are then asked complete a short survey regarding their perceptions of the mediation, the outcome and how they were treated.

⁶ Imperati, S.J. (1997). Mediator practice models: The intersection of ethics and stylistic practices in mediation. *Willamette Law Review*, 33, 703.

The Nevada Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) contracted the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) to conduct an assessment of the juvenile dependency mediation program in Washoe County. The assessment goals were threefold: to evaluate the implementation process of the program; to evaluate satisfaction with the program; and to assess what impact the mediation program might have on outcomes for maltreated children. Along these lines, the current study seeks to answer the following questions:

Process Evaluation

1. What were the challenges and successes with program implementation?
2. What could have improved the program implementation process?
3. Is the mediation program successfully engaging parents and stakeholders?
4. Does mediation save court time/reduce workload?
5. In what ways could the program be improved?

Satisfaction Evaluation

6. How are parents treated during mediation sessions?
7. Do parents' perceptions of treatment affect agreement rates?
8. Do stakeholders and parents perceive that mediation is helpful?
9. What did participants find most and least helpful about the mediation session?

Outcome Evaluation

10. Does mediation result in different outcomes for children and families?
11. Does mediation result in timelier outcomes for children and families?
12. Does mediation result in time savings in terms of vacated trials, hearing hours, and case continuances?

For the process evaluation, an online survey was sent to stakeholders involved with the juvenile dependency mediation program to learn more about successes and challenges with program implementation, how the program is currently functioning, mediation utilization barriers, how mediation affects workload, and how the program can be improved in the future. Follow-up interviews with the mediators, program administrator and stakeholders were conducted to gain a full understanding of program implementation and functioning.

As part of ongoing efforts to gauge program satisfaction, mediators give all mediation participants—parents and stakeholders—a survey after each mediation session. The survey asks participants whether an agreement was reached, if participants had opportunities to voice their opinions and be a part of problem resolution, if participants felt like they had been ignored, treated with respect and truly listened to, if the mediation session was conducted fairly, if they believed the mediated agreement would work, and what they found the most and least helpful. A sample of the satisfaction surveys (n = 44) was given to NCJFCJ researchers to explore differences in perceptions between parents and stakeholders and answer the research questions.

In Washoe County, enough cases had been mediated to assess the program’s effect on case outcomes and timeliness of case processing. Using a standardized case file review instrument, researchers coded a sample (n = 44) of cases that had been referred to mediation and a sample of cases (n = 47) that were not mediated for. Because the majority of mediations occur at the TPR phase, the sample focused only on cases that had filed a petition to terminate parental rights.

Process Evaluation

To assess the mediation process, researchers administered an online survey to system stakeholders and conducted follow-up in-depth interviews with key mediation participants (i.e., mediators, attorneys, etc.). The online survey was sent to child welfare stakeholders and mediators in February, 2013. Seventeen responded to the online survey. Fourteen respondents indicated their role (Table 1).

Table 1. Role of Respondents		
	N	%
Administrator	1	7
Attorney	6	43
Social Work Supervisor	2	14
Child Advocate	1	7
Mediator	4	29
Total	14	100

Fourteen respondents indicated how many mediation sessions they attend per month on average. Half of the respondents (50%) said they attend one to two mediation sessions per month, while 29% attend three to four. The remaining 21% indicated they never attend mediation sessions.

Implementation

To understand how the mediation program was implemented, stakeholders involved in the implementation process answered the following questions in the online survey:

- What were the barriers or challenges in implementation?
- What were the strengths in implementation?
- Were there things that you believe could have been done to expedite the implementation or improve the implementation process?

Implementation Barriers

In Washoe County, program start up activities lasted about one month; the program was funded to begin in July of 2011, and the first mediation occurred in August of 2011. The small delay was due to several reasons: extra time needed to update the program forms, procedures, and protocols; training mediators and stakeholders; and hiring a third mediator. Respondents said that barriers included a need for more start up activities and training than anticipated, push back from some stakeholders because they felt mediation consumed time they did not have, lack of knowledge of how mediation could help move cases forward, and resistance to mediating rather than litigating. These challenges carried into the first few months of the mediation program; few cases were mediated until the court mandated that certain types of cases be sent to mediation.

Implementation Strengths

Participants were also asked what worked well during project start up. Several respondents cited the initial outreach to the stakeholders groups—child welfare agency, public defenders, district attorneys, children’s counsel, and CASA—in introducing the program and educating them on the mediation process as a crucial step in implementation success. Other elements important to program implementation success were judicial leadership, mediators with enough experience to jump in and apply mediation principles to the child protection arena, and staff assistance and support.

Improving Implementation Process

Participants were asked what could have been done to improve the implementation process. Responses varied from “introduce the program to stakeholders weeks in advance to implementation” to “there

needs to be someone in place who organizes and guides the project [implementation] from the start.” Additionally, several stakeholders said that it would have been better to start out the program with court ordered mediations rather than relying on people to volunteer.

Program Goal

When asked what the goal of the dependency mediation program is, several respondents said the primary goal of the program is to engage in non-adversarial dispute resolution to save time and eliminate the need for court. Respondents also said that the goal of the program is to give parties, and especially parents a voice in the dependency process; to help move cases forward to permanency; to help everyone look to the best interests of the children; and to get parties communicating and problem solving.

Program Functioning

Survey participants⁷ were asked to rate their level of agreement on several response items related to implementation, participation, and effects of mediation. Table 2 presents the results for all responses along a five-point scale, with 1 being “strongly disagree” and 5 being “strongly agree.” Higher numbers, therefore indicate more agreement with the statement.

Table 2. Average Response Ratings	
The implementation of the mediation program was a success (n=13)	4.6
All stakeholders who are invited attend mediation sessions (n=12)	4.2
Parents, who are invited, attend mediation sessions (n=12)	3.9
Mediation sessions are successful in reaching agreements (n=12)	4.7
Parents at mediation sessions are engaged in the process (n=12)	4.7
Mediation reduces the time to case resolution (n=11)	4.6
All stakeholders at mediation sessions are prepared (n=13)	4.2
All stakeholders at mediation sessions work toward reaching agreement (n=12)	4.3
Parents at mediation sessions work toward reaching agreement (n=13)	4.2
Mediation is a good alternative to court (n=13)	4.8
All stakeholders get a voice at mediation sessions (n=12)	4.7
Parents get a voice during mediation session (n=12)	5
Age appropriate children are invited to attend mediations (n=13)	3.3

⁷ The n’s reflect the total number of participants who answered the question. While there were 14 participants overall, not all completed the entire survey.

As shown in the above table, the average response for most items ranged between somewhat agree and strongly agree. Some notable exceptions are that respondents indicated less agreement with “Parents, who are invited, attend mediation sessions” and “Age appropriate children are invited to attend mediations.” All survey participants who answered the question “Parents get a voice during mediation sessions” strongly agreed.

Participants were also asked several open ended questions:

- What are the barriers to utilizing mediation for parents?
- What are the barriers to utilizing mediation for stakeholders?
- In moving forward with the mediation program, what are some ways in which the program could be improved?

Utilization Barriers: Parents

In terms of barriers for parents, one respondent noted that scheduling can be a barrier depending on parent’s employment and/or child care situation. Also, early morning sessions (i.e. 9am) have been a barrier for parents sometimes due to work schedules, lack of established daily routine, or other issues.

The circumstances of parents’ lives can also act as barriers and prevent parents from attending mediation sessions. Several participants said that parents are often unemployed, unsettled and have a lack of resources, including transportation and telephone services. As a result, parent’s attorneys are often unable to reach the parents to remind them or tell them of the mediation appointment. These factors contribute to the rate of no shows.

Utilization Barriers: Stakeholders

Barriers for stakeholders include time and competing demands. Attorneys, social workers, and mediators are very busy and scheduling all parties for 3-hour blocks is a challenge. Another significant challenge for stakeholders is buy-in and satisfaction with the mediation process. One stakeholder noted that mediation is a court-ordered time investment that does not consistently result in an agreement.

Program Improvement

Areas for improvement broadly included: providing parents with more information ahead of time on the mediation process; more feedback to stakeholders regarding mediation; better trained mediators in the area of dependency law; and more proactive mediation. One participant also said that more visible court support of the program would be useful, while another suggested that there should be some “focus on ways to have the mediations occur sooner in the case. So much time is lost [in terms of legal timelines] before the parents come to agreement and get to work on their reunification tasks.”

In terms of providing parents with more information ahead of time on mediation, one respondent suggested providing an instruction sheet or appointment reminder at the hearing in which mediation is ordered. The reminder could include the date, time, and place of the scheduled mediation, along with the mediation department's contact information, and be provided to the parties along with the program's brochure.

Several respondents noted that more feedback from the mediators and more contact with the stakeholders would be beneficial. This includes providing information and statistics regarding the agreement rate, and time and costs savings associated with mediation. This also includes follow up training with stakeholders to enhance engagement, and more frequent stakeholder meetings in order to better understand their perception of mediation. One participant said that a feedback process that allows all participants to feel comfortable in giving honest opinions would also be an improvement.

Another participant indicated that training in the area of dependency law would be of great benefit to the mediators. This opinion was seconded by another respondent who indicated that “if the mediators were better educated on the procedural status of any given case and what must really be mediated at any given session...much less time would be wasted.” In terms of mediation style, another participant said that the mediation sessions need to stick to the relevant issues being mediated and that, at times, the mediator needs to take better control over the session.

Workload

Survey participants were asked how mediation affected their workload. The answers are reported in Table 3.

Table 3. Mediation and Workload	
Mediation reduces my workload (n=11)	3.64
Mediation requires the same amount of time as going to court (n=12)	2.36
Mediation adds to my workload (n=12)	2.82

As shown above, the average answer from participants regarding reduction of workload was between “neither agree nor disagree” and “somewhat agree.” Conversely, the average answer regarding increases to workload was between “neither agree nor disagree” and “somewhat disagree.” The respondents “somewhat disagreed” that mediation requires the same amount of time as going to court.

Additional Comments regarding workload included:

- When all the parties come to the table in good faith with a collaborative attitude and are prepared, mediation often results in an agreement, which reduces the stakeholders' workload.
- Mediation actually increases my workload because I typically am not required to testify in trials. Mediation requires me to do a lot of preparation and meet with the workers and attorney in advance of the session, and then the session itself is set for 3 hours. In my opinion there is a lot of time wasting that occurs in the 3 hours. It doesn't feel like there is ever a sense of urgency to get the work of the meeting completed.

Follow Up Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted with eight mediators and juvenile dependency stakeholders to get a better sense of how the program was implemented, how it is currently working, and any areas for improvement. Interview participants were asked specifically about the barriers and successes related to program implementation, challenges, improvement areas, parent and stakeholder engagement, and benefits of the program. (Questions are listed below in blue.) The themes that arose from the interviews were similar to the responses found in the online survey and although there were several different questions asked, the same issues seemed to appear in different questions.

What did you see as barriers to implementing the mediation program?

- *Buy-in from stakeholders.* Most interview participants noted that after attending several mediations and seeing the results, opinions began to shift about mediation. It was no longer

seen as “just one more thing to do” but is now seen, by most, as a time savings investment by ultimately preventing days-long trials.

- *Voluntary mediations.* In the beginning of project implementation, mediations were voluntary; however they are now court-ordered. When the mediations were voluntary, there was little buy-in from stakeholders who already felt over-worked, so this made success difficult to attain.
- *Parent attendance issues.* Although mediation is now court-ordered in dependency cases, there is no enforcement when parents do not show up. Some respondents felt there should be some consequences for not attending mediation.
- *Fragmented framework.* Some participants stated that the inadequate framework in the beginning was a barrier, because this created confusion about the process and expectations. Many people proceeded and felt they couldn’t wait for others to “get on board”; this may have created discomfort for some who may have been new to the process.

What did you see as successes to implementing the mediation program?

- *Good communication.* It was noted that communication among mediators and the court was good. This helped to smooth out the referral process.
- *Outreach and passion.* Initial outreach by mediators to educate stakeholders about mediation was successful. Many of the mediators are very passionate about mediation and know how successful it can be.
- *Transition to court-ordered mediation.* As stated above, when the program was initially implemented the mediation was voluntary but that has since moved from voluntary to court ordered mediations.

What are the biggest challenges to reaching an agreement?

- *Adversarial propensity.* Some in the mediation process still have the desire to litigate rather than reach an agreement outside of court. There can be unwillingness to compromise and some participants are coming into mediation very positioned.

- *Juvenile dependency timelines (Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997)*. Some parents may still be trying to reunify, even though it may be a termination case. This may leave parents feeling like they are not part of the process and parties come to mediation with different agendas.
- *No shows*. This was an issue that appeared many times throughout the interviews and there was a level of frustration with this. Some participants felt that there may be a communication issue, with some parents being transient and difficult to get a hold of, and others felt that parent's attorneys did not clearly communicate the mediation date to them.
- *New to the process*. Unclear understanding of juvenile dependency on part of mediators was discussed as an issue, because they lack a clear understanding of the law. Also, new or private attorneys can create a challenge because they may be new to the dependency system and the mediation process and are unclear as to the goals of mediation.
- *Parents*. Parents themselves can sometimes pose the biggest challenge in mediation because for them so much is at stake and often times they may have "dug their heels in" before they reach mediation.

What do you see as areas of the program that need improvement?

- *Education about the benefits of the process*. Several stakeholders acknowledged that more information about the program's results would be beneficial to all stakeholders, especially for those who do not frequently attend mediations or who are new to juvenile dependency and may still be skeptical. Sharing statistics on agreement rates and time saved would help stakeholders understand mediation within a larger context.
- *Strategies for dealing with no-show parents*. This would be up to court ultimately but possible consequences could be default if they don't show to the settlement conference. Currently, there are no ramifications if parents don't show to mediation. Some participants suggested that if there was more of an enforcement of parents showing up to mediation this might address this issue.
- *Quality assurance of survey process*. Post-mediation surveys need to truly allow honest and anonymous feedback for the mediators.

- *Increased skilled mediators and fidelity to a mediation model.* Some participants noted that mediators should be more pro-active and less passive mediators. Also noted was that all the mediators should use the same style of mediation and techniques.

How parent engagement with the mediation process could be improved?

- *Better education for parents.* Prior to their mediation session, it is essential to educate parents so they can learn how mediation is different from court—the parents don't know the process and don't know what to expect. It is not uncommon for the "regular players" to speak before mediation but there is a need to reach the parents as well.
- *Improved communication.* It is currently the parent attorneys' responsibilities to notify their clients of the mediation time and date and to prepare them for the mediation. This can be problematic with a highly mobile population and many attorneys do not have a chance to meet with their clients before mediation. This contributes to the no show rate and also confusion by the parents as to the purpose of mediation.
- *Empowering parents.* Making certain that the parents are heard and that their attorneys don't do all the talking is important. One participant noted that it is important not to demonize parents during mediation. If there was an education piece prior to mediation, parents might come to a session with an understanding that this is different from court and this is their chance to be heard and to engage.

How could stakeholder engagement with the mediation process be improved?

- *Development of stakeholder buy-in.* In order to improve stakeholder engagement with the mediation process, every interview participant discussed the importance of buy-in and the need for a consistent feedback loop between the mediators and the stakeholders. The mediators want to improve buy-in and recognize the need to share the program's impact with stakeholders but don't necessarily know how to best go about that.
- *Improved reporting system and information sharing.* The stakeholders also want to know more about the program and would like to see data that demonstrates time savings. All participants noted that "the proof is in the pudding," meaning that most people change their perspective of mediation after attending a few and seeing the results. But that is an inefficient way of getting

buy-in, especially since many stakeholders don't attend much mediation (especially social workers). Quarterly reports that could be easily adapted and disseminated to stakeholders were suggested.

- *Relationship building.* A closer relationship between mediators and stakeholders should be developed for future success. Exploration of mediators becoming part of the Model Court was suggested.

What they find the most beneficial about mediation?

- *Creation of cooperative relationships.* Having people come to better working relationships is invaluable. Mediation especially improves relationship between parents and social workers and creates more cooperation between parents and agency.
- *Conflict resolution.* Less stressful than hearings for parents, mediation is a better way to problem solve, especially for parents and children. Mediation gets all players involved and allows them an opportunity to talk and listen to each other
- *Time-savings.* Time saving frees up judge's and lawyers' calendars and takes pressure off the workload.
- *Encouraging environment.* Gives parents a different venue for being heard and it is an alternative that can be conducive to moving case forward. Mediation is a great opportunity for people to find their voice, which is often lost in the court process

Satisfaction Evaluation

After a mediation session, all participants are given satisfaction surveys. The surveys ask parents and other family members to indicate their perceptions of how they were treated and involved during the mediation session, along with the level of agreement. The surveys ask stakeholders to indicate where the case stands in the dependency process, their perceptions of how they were treated and involved and whether the session was conducted fairly. The surveys ask all participants to note what was most and least helpful about the mediation session.

Surveys for 44 mediation sessions were given to researchers. Parent and stakeholder responses were matched, allowing researchers to assess whether perceptions differ.

Level of Agreement

The surveys asked participants to indicate whether the mediation session resulted in full, partial or no agreement. It is difficult to report the agreement rate from the satisfaction surveys. Out of the 44 mediations, all participants indicated the same level of agreement in only 14 sessions (32%). In the remaining mediations, participants marked different levels of agreement. For example, in one session, five participants marked “no agreement,” one participant marked “partial agreement” and one participant marked “full agreement.” The discrepancy in agreement levels indicates a breakdown in communication as to the formal level of agreement in the majority of mediation sessions. Despite the discrepancy, 50% of mediation participants indicated that the mediation resulted in full agreement (see below).

	N	%
No	62	22
Partial	76	27
Full	140	50
Missing	3	1
Total	281	100

Parental treatment and participation during mediation sessions

Sixty-four of the 281 mediation participants were biological parents, extended family members, children, foster parents or guardians. All were asked if the mediator explained the process so they knew what to expect. The majority “strongly agreed” with that statement (59%). Participants were also asked if they had a chance to voice their opinion and if they were treated with respect. A majority of respondents “strongly agreed” that they had a chance to voice their opinion and were treated with respect (56% and 58%, respectively). There was no substantive difference when biological parents’ responses were analyzed separately. All parents were also asked if they felt listened to during the mediation. The majority of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed (45% and 41%, respectively). In terms of feeling ignored or unimportant, a majority of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed (48%

and 36%, respectively). Parents were asked if they were a part of finding answers to problems discussed; 47% agreed and 41% strongly agreed. Finally, when asked if the mediator treated everyone fairly, 64% of parents strongly agreed. See Table 5, below.

Table 5. Parental Treatment and Involvement (Percent)					
	No, Strongly Disagree	No, Disagree	Yes, Agree	Yes, Strongly Agree	Missing
The mediator explained the mediation process clearly	0	2	33	59	6
Did you have chance to voice your opinion?	0	2	38	56	5
Were you treated with respect?	2	3	38	58	0
Were you really listened to?	2	8	45	41	5
Did you feel ignored or unimportant?	36	48	8	2	6
Were you able to be a part of finding answers to problems?	0	3	47	41	9
Did the mediator treat everyone fairly?	0	0	31	64	5

Do parents’ perceptions of having a voice and being part of the decision-making process affect agreement rates?

A linear regression analysis was calculated to determine if the above variables affected parents’ reported agreement rates. Two variables were significantly related to higher agreement rates: the mediator clearly explaining the mediation process so the participants knew what to expect ($B = 0.52, SE = .25, p = .04$) and parents feeling as though they were able to be a part of finding answers to problems ($B = 0.60, SE = .27, p = .03$). The overall R^2 of the model was .31, indicating that these variables explain 31% of the variance. For each of these variables, higher agreement with the variable was related to higher probability of reaching full agreement in the mediation.

Do stakeholders and parents perceive that mediation is helpful?

Even in instances where no agreement was reached, many stakeholders and parents indicated that mediation was helpful. The survey asked parents if they thought the agreement would work. Forty-three (67%) parents answered the question. The majority of respondents (65%) said yes, while 33% were unsure or hoped so. Only one parent said the agreement would not work, and that was in an instance where no agreement was reached. There were no statistically significant differences between

perceptions of voicing an opinion, being listened to, or being treated with respect by stakeholders and parents.

Most and least helpful about mediation

Across the board, what participants found most helpful about mediation was the opportunity for all parties to gather at the same table, share information and talk openly in a neutral, non-hostile environment. Other benefits to mediation were learning about the positions of other parties, receiving updates on the case and child placement, engaging in problem solving, reaching compromises, and allowing parties, especially parents, to express their opinions—all within an environment that is less stressful than court.

What participants found least helpful about mediation were instances where discussion would get off topic or too focused on irrelevant issues, tension between parties, parties unwilling to compromise, and unprepared parties.

Outcome Evaluation

For the outcome evaluation, researchers employed a systematic review of the court case files using a structured data collection instrument. Three coders collected data on 91 cases that had filed a termination of parental rights (TPR) petition; 44 cases had been referred to mediation at the TPR phase and 47 that had not been referred to mediation. Although 44 cases were referred to mediation, only 30 were mediated. To be considered a mediated case, it had to meet two criteria. First, the mediation could not be vacated. Second, one or both parents must have attended the mediation. If both parents did not attend the mediation, but the parties reached an agreement via their legal counsel, this would be considered a mediated case. Using these criteria, 30 mediated cases and 61 non-mediated cases were used to answer the following research questions:

- Does mediation result in different outcomes?
- Does mediation result in timelier outcomes for children and families?
- Does mediation result in time savings in terms of vacated trials, hearing hours, and case continuances?

Outcomes

Several chi-square tests of independence were conducted to examine the relationship between mediation and parent outcomes. As only termination of parental rights cases were examined, these outcomes included whether parents defaulted, relinquished their parental rights, had their parental rights terminated by the court, or had the termination petition against them dismissed. Overall, 29% (N = 26) of mothers and 35% (N = 32) of fathers defaulted.⁸ Forty-five percent (N = 41) of mothers and 33% (N = 30) of fathers relinquished their parental rights. Seven percent (N = 6) of mothers and 15% (N = 14) of fathers had their parental rights terminated by the court. Finally, 7% (N = 6) of mothers and 4% (N = 4) of fathers had the petition against them dismissed. The remaining cases had not yet terminated parental rights.

The analyses indicated that mediation was significantly related to default orders against the mother, $\chi^2(1, N = 91) = 5.09, p = .02$. In 13% (N = 4) of mediated cases the mother defaulted, compared to 36% (N = 22) of non-mediated cases. Mediation was also significantly related to default orders against the father, $\chi^2(1, N = 91) = 4.51, p = .03$. In 20% (N = 6) of mediated cases the father defaulted, compared to 43% (N = 26) of non-mediated cases. There were no differences in mediated and non-mediated cases in terms of relinquishment, the court ordering termination, or in the dismissal of the termination petition.

Timeliness

Removing children from their homes is traumatic for all involved parties. Moreover, federal and state legislation (e.g., ASFA) exists to ensure timeliness to final case outcomes. For these reasons, several independent samples t-tests were conducted to examine mediated and non-mediated cases with regard to differences in timeliness to case outcomes (i.e., time from initial removal to final TPR order, time from initial removal to dismissal, time from TPR filing to final TPR order, and time from TPR filing to dismissal) of the dependency petition) for mothers and fathers. See Table 6 for the average number of days for mothers and fathers for each timeliness measure.

⁸ Default cases are those in which the parent(s) did not show up for the termination of parental rights petition hearing to enter a plea of admit or deny. Mediated cases should be less likely to result in default as parents are often referred to mediation at this hearing. If the parents are not present, they would not be referred to mediation.

Table 6. Timeliness Measures for Mothers and Fathers Across All Cases (Average Number of Days)		
	Mothers	Fathers
Initial Removal to Final TPR Order	671	663
TPR Filing to Final TPR Order	165	157
TPR Filing to Petition Dismissal	318	284
TPR Filing to Mediation	185	
Mediation Referral to Mediation Occurrence	61	
TPR Filing to Settlement Conference	170	

There was a significant difference between mediated and non-mediated cases in the amount of days from initial removal and the mother’s final TPR order, $t(56) = 2.16, p = .04$. For mothers, cases that were mediated averaged 816 days, while non-mediated cases took 586 days from initial removal to final TPR order. For fathers, cases that were mediated and non-mediated did not differ on the amount of days from initial removal to their final TPR order.

This difference is likely due, at least in part, by the difference in time from TPR filing to relinquishment of parental rights. For mothers, the cases that were mediated were shorter if they did not relinquish parental rights, but were longer if the mother did relinquish parental rights. The table below illustrates these times.

Table 7. Timeliness from TPR Petition to Final TPR Order		
Mothers	Mediated	Non-Mediated
Mother did not relinquish	74	140
Mother relinquished parental rights	249	168
Fathers		
Father did not relinquish	180	134
Father relinquished parental rights	173	207

There were also no significant differences between mediated and non-mediated cases for overall time from TPR filing to final TPR order or time from TPR filing to petition dismissal for mothers or fathers.

Time Savings

A final series of analyses were conducted to examine whether mediation provides a time savings to the court over non-mediated cases. With court dockets becoming crowded and resources becoming limited, the ability to save time is increasingly important. Areas where mediation may save time are in the number of trial hours scheduled, continuances, and hearings vacated. In the current sample, the average

number of trial hours scheduled across all cases was 10.63. The average number of continuances was less than one (.40). The average number of hearings vacated was 1.78.

Mediated cases significantly differed from non-mediated cases on the number of trial hours scheduled, $F(1,72) = 19.75, p < .001$. Mediated cases were scheduled, on average, for 15 hours, which was significantly more than non-mediated cases, which were scheduled for 8 hours, on average. There was a significant difference between mediated and non-mediated cases on the number of case continuances, $F(1,89) = 5.80, p = .02$. Mediated cases were continued an average of .7 times in the case, while non-mediated cases were continued .3 times. There was also a significant difference in the number of hearings vacated between mediated and non-mediated cases, $F(1,89) = 26.60, p < .001$. Mediated cases averaged 2.9 vacated hearings, compared to non-mediated cases, which averaged 1.3. There was no significant difference between mediated and non-mediated cases on the number of hearings held.

Additional chi-square tests of independence were conducted to examine the relationship between mediation and whether several hearings (i.e., settlement conference, first TPR trial, and last TPR trial) were vacated across the life of the case. Mediation was significantly related to vacating the settlement conference, $\chi^2(1, N = 66) = 4.07, p = .04$. Mediated cases had the settlement conference vacated 34% (N=10) of the time, compared to 14% (N=5) of the time for non-mediated cases.

Limitations of Case File Review

It should be noted that the results of the case file review only show associations of mediation with case outcomes. The study design does inhibit causal inference. That is, we cannot draw cause and effect conclusions, or say that mediation causes changes. In particular, time may be the biggest indicator of change. The pre-mediation group had TPR petitions filed in late 2009, 2010, or early 2011, compared to the post-mediation group, which was late 2011, early 2012. Practice may have changed over time, resulting in the scheduling of longer hearings or more continuances. Indeed, the cases that had TPR petitions filed later (late 2011, early 2012) and did not go to mediation, looked more like the mediated cases than the comparison group. Another limitation of this research is that TPR cases are separate from their juvenile dependency cases, making it impossible to determine what the case outcome was, including whether and when the child was adopted.

Discussion

Overall, mediation in dependency cases (in Washoe County) is successful with some lessons learned during the implementation phase. In general, both parents and stakeholders agreed that mediation generally speaking is successful. Stakeholders agreed that mediation lessened their workload in preparation and hearings and is a good alternative to court. Parents also agreed that they felt heard, respected, and treated fairly during the process. When parents felt part of the process and when the mediators clearly explained the process, this was associated with a higher level of agreement. In terms of outcomes, mediation appeared to reduce the number of default orders for mothers and fathers. For mothers, mediated cases resulted in longer time for case outcomes for mothers but no difference for fathers. There was also an association between mediation and an increased number of continuances and vacated settlement conferences and trials.

There are some areas of improvement, such as addressing so-called no-show parents. This may be an issue of communication, where an innovative approach to scheduling may need to be explored by stakeholders. As stated by interview participants, this population can be problematic because they are transient in nature, but there needs to be an understanding that parents may not understand what mediation will accomplish for them and what barriers exist for them to attend mediation. Barriers might include transportation, time-off work, child-care, or not knowing where they (parents) need to be. A discussion of any barriers and the benefits of mediation with parents before mediation is scheduled may alleviate this attendance issue. Another area of improvement is education of parents and stakeholders. For parents, an orientation of mediation before their session would be extremely helpful for them to understand how mediation is different than a hearing. There also needs to be education for stakeholders about the results that are seen through mediation in terms of time-savings.

Recommendations for Program Improvements

The findings of this process, satisfaction and outcome evaluation allowed for generation of some recommendations for program improvements. These recommendations are meant to help guide discussions of ways that the program could be improved, but are also important to provide context and useful information to new sites that may be struggling with or in the process of establishing their own mediation programs. The recommendations listed below include the areas of implementation and startup as well as considerations for improving current practice.

Implementation Lessons Learned & Recommendations

1. *Education & Outreach Are Important.* Program startup should include education and outreach to all stakeholders who may/should be involved in the mediation. The Washoe mediation program did a good job of outreaching to partners. Enhancing this educational piece by discussing the benefits and goals of mediation at collaborative meeting and ensuring follow-up with all stakeholders sites will be important to any program starting out.
2. *Buy-In From All Stakeholders Will Help Encourage Mediations.* Even if project partners are educated about the benefits of mediation, mediation may not be successful if key professional stakeholders do not believe the program is beneficial and useful. Engaging in meaningful discussions about the benefits of mediation may help to improve buy-in.
3. *The Referral Process Makes a Difference.* Mediations were much less common when they were on a referral basis. Court ordered mediation increased the number of mediations and ensured stakeholder participation.
4. *Parent Education is Necessary.* Parents should learn about mediation prior to attending a mediation session. Protocols should be developed that address how to best educate parents. Some ideas generated from these findings suggest that providing parents with a brochure that describes mediation or having attorneys discuss the benefits of mediation with their clients prior to the scheduled hearing may help facilitate parent involvement in mediation.

Improving Process & Recommendations for Next Steps

5. *Ensure All Parties Understand the Agreement.* Satisfaction surveys revealed that the parties involved did not always have the same perception of the level of agreement that was reached. It is important that *all* persons understand whether full agreement was reached. In particular, this is important for parents, to ensure that they know what occurred at the mediation and what the next steps are in the case.
6. *Ongoing Education & Outreach.* Education and outreach should not stop with implementation. There is a high rate of turnover for many of the professional stakeholders involved in the child welfare system. Continuing education and outreach efforts will ensure that new stakeholders are familiar with the program. One potential outlet in Washoe for this continued education may be the Model Court collaborative meetings that occur monthly.

- 7. *Consistent Domestic Violence Screening & Treatment.*** Although domestic violence screening was not a focus of the review, researchers noted several court referrals that indicated that domestic violence was involved in the case. There did not seem to be consistency among mediators as to how the cases were screened, or how they treated cases when domestic violence did occur. At a minimum, all cases should be screened using a standard tool (across mediators). Parents should be asked the questions directly to ensure the mediators are accurately able to identify concerns with coercive or threatening behavior by the perpetrator, in order to inform a safe mediation where all parties feel like they have a voice.
- 8. *Decrease No-Show Rate.*** If parents do not show up for mediation, the mediation cannot occur. Many stakeholders noted the “no-show” rate as a barrier. Consider making mediation information available to parents when they at court hearings. A pamphlet that explains what mediation is, includes contact information for the mediation administrator, and has the time, date, and location of the scheduled mediation would be useful for both orienting parents to the purpose of mediation and serving as a reminder for when they are supposed to be there. Increasing parent’s understanding of the benefits of mediation prior to attending or being referred to mediation may also help increase parents’ attendance. Other sites have also had success with playing a video that describes their mediation program. This may be effective played at Family Services, so parents better understand the process.
- 9. *Identify Areas for Improved Efficiency.*** A few stakeholders mentioned that mediation is too lengthy. The mediation program has implemented some efficient practices, such as staggering arrival times to ensure professional stakeholders are not kept waiting, and ensuring a laptop is on site for immediate documentation of the agreement for distribution. System participants should consider what other efficiency strategies may help with this process.
- 10. *Share Results.*** A summary of the mediation reports might be useful to share with system stakeholders in order to increase buy-in and to demonstrate the positive results of mediation. At a minimum, identifying the number of the mediations held, the agreement rate, and the percentage of time this results in vacated hearings would be interesting to stakeholders and could help with outreach and buy-in of other stakeholders in the process.

Conclusion

Overall, the mediation program is successful in meeting several of its goals. Parents who attend mediation are engaged. They feel that they have a voice in the system and they believe it is helpful. Stakeholders also believe the process is helpful, although they did express some concerns with no-show parents and time commitments. Mediation also results in agreement the majority of the time, which facilitates communication and collaboration among system stakeholders. Mediated cases were also related to more hearings vacated than the comparison group. This information should be interpreted with caution, however, and the number of trial hours scheduled (and vacated) appeared to increase over time.

Mediation was not related to timeliness of case processing. This may be because researchers only examined termination of parental rights cases and the majority ended in relinquishment by one or both parties. It may be that mediation does not result in timelier case processing at the TPR phase, but it may still result in better outcomes. For example, the relinquishment agreements in mediated cases may result in more opportunities for parents to negotiate the adoption language and future contact with the child. Future research can examine a more qualitative perspective of mediation to determine if it is better meeting the needs of the parents. Future research should also examine cases where mediation occurred at different times in the process to determine if mediation is related to timely case progression and outcomes when it is held earlier in the case.

2013

RESEARCH REPORT
OUTCOME EVALUATION OF MEDIATION
IN WASHOE COUNTY, NEVADA



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DECEMBER 2013

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In August of 2011, the Second Judicial District of Nevada (Washoe County) implemented a mediation program for parents and stakeholders who are in the midst of the child abuse and neglect court system. The goal of mediation is to avoid further litigation through voluntary case resolution, which can enhance case processing and improve outcomes in juvenile dependency cases. Parties can come together in a neutral setting to address the issues surrounding the case, and what options are available given the status of the case, through the assistance of an impartial third party.

In 2012, Nevada Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) contracted the NCJFCJ to assess mediation. The assessment included a process evaluation, a satisfaction evaluation, and an outcome evaluation. The initial outcome evaluation focused on only termination of parental rights (TPR) cases. When the mediation program first began in Washoe County, these cases were primarily referred to mediation. An additional outcome evaluation was recently conducted to assess differences between dependency cases that were referred to mediation to those that were not. This study expands on the first outcome evaluation by examining the effectiveness of mediation earlier in the case. This follow-up study excluded any cases that were in the TPR phase because this had already been examined during the first outcome evaluation, and included a case file review of 27 mediated cases compared to 25 cases that had not been mediated with the use of a standardized instrument.

Key Findings

Key findings included:

- Mediated cases were more likely to result in reunification when compared to non-mediated cases.
- Fathers who participated in mediation were present at more hearings compared to fathers who did not participate.
- Mothers and fathers who participated in mediation were less likely to stipulate to allegations listed on the petition compared to parents who did not participate.

This outcome evaluation demonstrated that many of the variables of interest trended in a positive direction, but did lack statistical significance. The study was limited in sample size and a larger sample size may have yielded more significant findings. A very positive finding from this outcome evaluation was that mediated cases result in more reunifications compared to non-mediated cases and that fathers were more engaged in the process. The Washoe County Mediation program has demonstrated that cases referred mediation can result in more reunified families.

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Introduction

Mediation is utilized to improve case processing and outcomes in juvenile dependency cases, as it helps to avoid further litigation.¹ Mediation is a form of alternative dispute resolution that resolves issues with the assistance of a neutral third party (mediator). The main objective of mediation is to facilitate a discussion where parties voluntarily resolve the issues that brought a family into the dependency system and produce a written agreement, in lieu of a traumatic contested hearing.² Parties that may attend mediation can include parents, child protective services, attorneys, and all others that may be involved in the case. During mediation, there is a focus on the family's strengths. The topics discussed depend largely on what issues are contested and may include: petition allegations, case planning, custody, visitation, shared parental responsibility, temporary and long-term placement, foster care, relative placement, shelter care, family dynamics, parent education, available services to families, family reunification, termination of parental rights, and/or adoption.³

Benefits to mediation in child dependency cases can include: time savings, efficiency, parent engagement, and improved outcomes for children involved. Time savings may occur for courts, attorneys, and social workers through potential lightened workload by the avoidance of additional litigation and the trial preparation.⁴ Although mediation can take several hours, if resolution occurs, this can save the courts countless hours and provide time for other cases to be processed. The mediation process can also engage parents. It is not uncommon for parents to feel angry, distrustful, and confused prior to mediation and, after mediation, feel empowered and like they have a voice in the process. Mediation is conducted by an experienced professional, in a confidential and respectful place that will foster an environment where parents feel they can be honest.² Anything disclosed during mediation cannot be used against the parents later in the case. Resolution (either full or partial) can be quite common and can result in faster case progression, which ultimately may result in shorter times to permanency for children and families.

¹ Giovannucci, M., and Largent, K. (2009). A guide to effective child protection mediation: Lessons from 25 years of practice. *Family Court Review*, 47, 38-52.

² Superior Court of California, County of Alameda. *Dependency Mediation*. Retrieved from: <http://www.alameda.courts.ca.gov/Resources/Documents/Dependency%20Mediation.pdf>

³ Eighth Judicial Circuit of Florida. *Frequently Asked Questions: Juvenile Dependency*. Retrieved from: <http://circuit8.org/mediation/dependency-mediation>

⁴ Summers, A., Wood, S. and Russell, J. (2011) Assessing Efficiency and Workload Implications of the King County Mediation Pilot. *OJJDP Journal of Juvenile Justice*, 1, 48-59. Retrieved from: <http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/King%20County%20Mediation%20Pilot%20Article.pdf>

Program Background

In August of 2011, the Nevada Court Improvement Program (CIP) funded the Second Judicial District of Nevada (Washoe County) to establish a juvenile dependency mediation program. This program was modeled after a mediation program that ran in the district in the early 2000s. Four mediators with years of experience mediating a variety of issues were recruited for the program. Mediation is administered by staff of the Second Judicial District. In Washoe County, juvenile dependency cases are automatically ordered to mediation by the court if there is a contested termination of parental rights (TPR) petition, contested permanency planning hearing, or other contested case issues. The date and time of the mediation session is set by the court, and formalized through a court order; participation by all parties to the case is mandatory. Three hours are set aside for each mediation session.

On the day of mediation, the mediator provides each parent a brief overview of the mediation process. All parties sign a confidentiality statement prior to the mediation. Mediators use a facilitative model of mediation, a style where the mediator does not present his or her own views of the case or of the agreement, and is instead focused on ensuring that all parties have an opportunity to be heard and that parties reach an agreement that meets everyone's needs.⁵ If an agreement is reached at the conclusion of mediation, a written agreement is printed and signed by those who have authority and each party receives a copy. The agreement is then entered into the electronic case management system and forwarded to the judge, who has to then sign the agreement and file a court order. All participants are then asked to complete a short survey regarding their perceptions of the mediation, the outcome and how they were treated.

A previous process and outcome evaluation was conducted by National Council of Juvenile and Family Court through a contract with the Nevada Administrative Office of the Courts. A multi-method approach was used, including structured interviews, online surveys, satisfaction surveys, and case file review. The results of the original process and outcome evaluation were positive, with high satisfaction with the program. The implementation process of the mediation program was highlighted, as well as outcome differences between mediated and non-mediated termination of parental rights cases. The full report can be found at http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/Assessing%20Mediation%20in%20Nevada_Washoe.pdf

⁵ Imperati, S.J. (1997). Mediator practice models: The intersection of ethics and stylistic practices in mediation. *Willamette Law Review*, 33, 703.

STUDY OVERVIEW

The Nevada Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) contracted the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) to conduct an assessment of the juvenile dependency mediation program in Washoe County. The Nevada Court Improvement Program (CIP) supports mediation as one method for improving timeliness of case process. The current outcome evaluation sought to assess what impact the mediation program might have on outcomes for maltreated children. The previous outcome evaluation only examined cases that were in the TPR phase, whereas this study excluded those cases and focused instead on cases mediated early in the process (typically pre-adjudication). Along these lines, the current study seeks to answer the following questions:

- Does mediation result in different outcomes for children and families?
- Does mediation improve engagement of parents in the process, in terms of:
 - a. Increased participation in the hearings?
 - b. Differences in the number of services offered to parents?
 - c. Compliance with case plans?
- Does mediation result in timelier outcomes for children and families?
- Does mediation result in time savings in terms of number of hearings and case continuances?

In Washoe County, enough cases had been mediated to assess the program's effect on case outcomes and timeliness of case processing. The inclusion criteria for this study were cases that were mediated from August 2011 through the end of 2012. These mediated cases were matched to non-mediated cases whose petition was initiated in August 2011 through the end of 2012. Using a standardized case file review instrument, researchers coded a sample (n = 27) of cases that had been mediated and a sample of cases (n = 25) that were not mediated for. It should be noted that 32 cases were referred to mediation within this period; however, five cases were vacated due to various reason and were placed in the non-mediated sample for comparison. Common reasons for mediation being vacated were parents not showing up to participate, an agreement was reached before mediation, or contested hearings. Because the previous outcome evaluated focused only on cases that had filed a petition to terminate parental rights, these cases were excluded from review and the focus was on cases that were referred to mediation for other reasons (i.e. contested petition).

OUTCOME EVALUATION RESULTS

For the outcome evaluation, researchers employed a systematic review of the court case files using a structured data collection instrument. Three coders collected data on 52 cases that had filed a juvenile dependency petition; 32 cases had been referred to mediation and 20 that had not been referred to mediation. Although 32 cases were referred to mediation, only 27 were mediated and 5 were vacated. To be considered a mediated case, it had to meet two criteria. First, the mediation could not be vacated. Second, one or both parents must have attended the mediation. Using these criteria, 27 mediated cases and 25 non-mediated cases were used to answer the following research questions:

- Does mediation result in different outcomes for children and families?
- Does mediation improve engagement of parents in the process?
- Does mediation result in timelier outcomes for children and families?
- Does mediation result in time savings in terms of number of hearing and case continuances?

Case Characteristics

To ensure mediated and non-mediated cases had similar characteristics when they entered the dependency system, several variables were examined. These included total average number of allegations listed on the petition, total average number of presenting problems and child's race.

The total average number of allegations against mothers listed on the petition did not vary much between mediated (1.22) and non-mediated (1.24) cases. For mothers, the average total number of presenting problems also did not vary greatly between mediated (2.2) and non-mediate cases (2.3).

The total average number of allegations against fathers listed on the petition did not vary much between mediated (0.71) and non-mediated (0.68) cases. For fathers, the average total number of presenting problems was 1.5 for mediated cases and 1.2 for non-mediated cases.

Child's race was collected during case reviews, and there did not appear to be major differences between mediated and non-mediated cases. See table 1 for full description. Based on the averages of the allegations, presenting problems and children's race, we can say the groups are statistically comparable and did not appear to be different coming in to the courts.

OUTCOME EVALUATION RESULTS

TABLE 1. CHILD'S RACE		
Race	Mediated % (n)	Non-mediated % (n)
African American	7.1% (1)	9.1% (2)
Hispanic	7.1% (1)	13.6% (3)
Caucasian	42.9% (6)	40.9% (9)
Native American	7.1% (1)	0% (0)
Undetermined	35.7% (5)	27.3% (6)
Missing Data	(13)	(3)

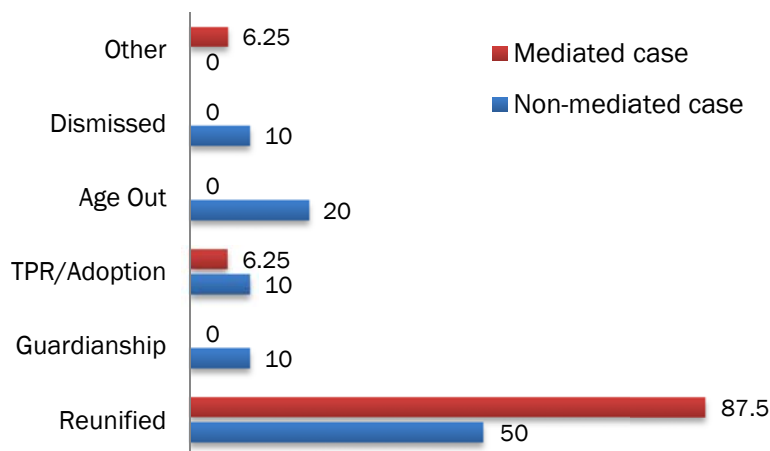
Outcomes

Does mediation result in different outcomes for children and families?

Fifty percent of all the cases had closed at the time of case file review. Of the mediated cases, 59% had closed and of the non-mediated cases, 40% had closed. Among mediated and closed cases, 87.5% of cases had reunified, 6.3% resulted in termination of parental rights (TPR)/Adoption and 6.3% were other outcomes. Among the non-mediated closed cases, only 50% had reunified, 10% guardianship, 10% TPR/adoption, 20% aged out, and 10% had been dismissed. This descriptive analysis demonstrates that more mediated cases had been closed at time of review and there were higher rates of reunification.

Chi-square tests of independence were conducted to examine the relationship between mediation and case outcomes. There was a significant difference between mediated and non-mediated cases and the likelihood of reunification compared to all other outcomes ($p=0.037$). Cases referred to mediation were more likely to result in reunification compared to cases not referred to mediation (see Figure 1).

FIG. 1 - CASE OUTCOME AS A PERCENTAGE OF CLOSED CASES



OUTCOME EVALUATION RESULTS

Children whose parents participated in mediation had slightly fewer placements compared those who did not participate. Cases that were referred to mediation resulted in an average of 2.1 placements compared to 2.7 among those who did not participate. This difference was not statistically significant ($p = .27$).

Parental Engagement

Does mediation improve engagement of parents in the process?

Engagement of parents in the process was conceptualized in two ways. First, we assessed parents' participation in hearings (i.e., how often across the life of the case did a parent attend the hearings). This measure is reported as a percentage (ranging from 0 to 100). Second, we examined the number of services ordered for each party. While this may not affect parent's engagement in the process, it illustrates the amount of effort that the agency is requiring of the parent. Third, we examined case plan compliance (i.e., findings at the review or permanency hearing as to how much the parent has complied with their plan). In theory, parents that are more engaged in the case will likely have higher compliance with their plan.

Hearing Participation

Overall, mothers were present 87% of all possible hearings. Mothers who participated in mediation attended 88% of hearings possible. Mothers who did not participate in mediation attended 85% of hearings possible. Participation in mediation slightly increased mother's presence at hearing, but not significantly.

Overall, fathers were present 62% of all possible hearings. Fathers who participated in mediation attended 72% of hearings possible. Fathers who did not participate in mediation only attended 50% of hearings possible. Participation in mediation significantly increased father's presence at hearings compared to fathers who did not participate in mediation ($p=0.057$).

Services Ordered

On average mothers who participated in mediation were referred and ordered to 4.1 services in their case plan. Mothers who did not participate in mediation were referred and ordered to an average of 4.8 services in their case plan. It is important to note that other services (i.e. home visits, compliance with parole, family drug court, etc.) were captured in an "other" category and not counted within this

OUTCOME EVALUATION RESULTS

analysis. Independent t-tests did not demonstrate statistically significant differences between the two groups.

On average fathers who participated in mediation were referred and ordered to 2.6 services in their case plan. Fathers who did not participate in mediation were referred and ordered to an average of 1.6 services in their case plan. Independent t-tests did not demonstrate statistically significant differences between the two groups.

Case Plan Compliance

Case plan compliance was also examined to explore any relationship with mediation. No statistically significant associations were found between mediation and case plan compliance. See Table 2 for descriptive analysis.

TABLE 2. SERVICE COMPLIANCE AT REVIEW AND PERMANENCY HEARINGS		
Hearing	Mediated % (n)	Non-mediated % (n)
Review hearing (mother)		
None	25% (5)	27.3% (6)
Partial	37.5% (9)	45.5% (10)
Full	37.5% (9)	27.3% (6)
Permanency hearing (mother)		
None	22.7% (5)	33.3% (6)
Partial	40.9% (9)	27.8% (5)
Full	36.4% (8)	38.9% (7)
Review hearing (father)		
None	38.9% (7)	30.8% (4)
Partial	38.9% (7)	38.5% (5)
Full	22.2% (4)	30.8% (4)
Permanency hearing (father)		
None	43.8% (7)	50% (6)
Partial	37.5% (6)	33.3% (4)
Full	18.8% (3)	16.7% (2)

Stipulations

Data were also collected on whether parents stipulated to charges in the petition. A stipulation is a situation where the parents agreed to (or did not contest) the allegations found in the petition. This variable was coded to either a parent stipulating or not at any point in the case. Overall, parents were less likely to stipulate to one or more allegations if they participated in mediation compared to parents who did not participate. This association was significant for fathers ($p=0.01$) and mothers ($p=0.08$).

OUTCOME EVALUATION RESULTS

Timeliness

Removing children from their homes is traumatic for all involved parties. Moreover, federal and state legislation (e.g., ASFA) exists to ensure timeliness to final case outcomes. For these reasons, several independent samples t-tests were conducted to examine mediated and non-mediated cases with regard to differences in timeliness to case outcomes (i.e., time from initial removal to case closure, time from petition filing to adjudication, and time from petition to permanency hearing) for mediated and non-mediated cases. See Table 3 for the average number of days for each timeliness measure.

TABLE 3. TIMELINESS MEASURES ACROSS ALL CASES (AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS)		
	Mediated	Non-mediated
Initial Removal to Case Closure	474	487
Petition Filing to Adjudication	65	34
Petition Filing to Permanency Hearing	356	341
Petition Filing to Mediation	190	n/a
Mediation Referral to Mediation Occurrence	30	n/a

There were no significant differences between mediated and non-mediated cases in the amount of time between initial removal to case closure, petition filing to adjudication, and petition filing to permanency hearing.

Continuances were examined at adjudication and total average number of continuances within the case. Mediated cases resulted in an average of 0.70 continuances at adjudication and non-mediated cases resulted in 0.64. Mediated cases resulted in an average of 1.48 total continuances and non-mediated cases resulted in 1.26. These differences were not statistically significant.

Limitations of Case File Review

It should be noted that the results of the case file review only demonstrated associations of mediation with case outcomes and fathers presence at hearings. The study design does inhibit causal inference. That is, we cannot draw cause and effect conclusions, or say that mediation causes changes. In particular, time may be the biggest indicator of change. An additional limitation to this study was a small sample size. While we cannot say for certain that mediation created the differences in cases, we can say there appears to be an association between mediation and some positive outcomes.

DISCUSSION

Association findings between mediated cases and outcomes, parental engagement, and timeliness indicators were limited. Mediated cases were more likely than non-mediated cases to result in reunification when compared to all other outcomes. Fathers who attended mediation were more likely to be present at hearings. Referring fathers to mediation may be a useful way to engage them in the juvenile dependency process. Fathers were also less likely to stipulate to allegations compared to fathers who were not referred to mediation. Mothers were also less likely to stipulate to allegations when they were referred to mediation. There were not statistically significant differences between services for mothers and fathers, average number of continuances, and timeliness indicators (i.e., case closure, petition to adjudication and permanency).

The previous process and outcome evaluations also demonstrated positive findings that should be emphasized. In the previous study of Washoe County's mediation program satisfaction surveys showed that both parents and stakeholders agreed that mediation generally speaking is successful. Stakeholders agreed that mediation lessened their workload in preparation and hearings and is a good alternative to court. Parents also agreed that they felt heard, respected, and treated fairly during the process. When parents felt part of the process and when the mediators clearly explained the process, this was associated with a higher level of agreement. In terms of outcomes, mediation appeared to reduce the number of default orders for mothers and fathers.

These types of findings are limited to surveys and the nuanced benefits of a mediation program may be lost in case file reviews. This case file review is a cross-sectional analysis, which cannot demonstrate long term benefits. Continued follow-up studies may be conducted to observe trends in case outcomes and re-entry into the system as a result of participating in mediation. Mediation observation could also be conducted to further understand and improve the current program.


CONCLUSION

This study demonstrated that mediated cases were more likely to result in reunification compared to cases not referred to mediation. This may indicate that mediation may be particularly useful as a tool for reunification. Mediation was also related to an increase engagement among fathers who participated in mediation. Fathers attended more hearings compared to fathers who do not attend mediation. Referring fathers to mediation may increase their overall participation in the dependency process and increase the likelihood of reunifying with their children.

The previous and current studies have shown that the mediation program in Washoe County can be an important piece to improve outcomes for children and families. Previous satisfaction surveys from parents showed that those who attend mediation are engaged, have a voice and believe it is helpful. Stakeholders also felt that the process is helpful. To demonstrate long-term results, it is important that the program monitor and track case outcomes and other key indicators.

Although the statistically significant findings in this study were limited, this may be a result a low sample size and it should not be interpreted to mean that mediation is not an important program for families involved in the dependency system. Washoe County's mediation program has been successful in meeting several of its goals since its implementation in 2011.

This outcome evaluation sought to answer if mediation impacts outcomes for children and families and the results demonstrated that families referred to mediation are more likely to reunify with their children compared to those who were not referred. Researchers look at parental engagement and found that fathers referred to mediation attended more hearings compared to fathers who were not referred. Researchers also sought to answer if mediation results in timelier outcomes and time savings for the court. Although there were no statistically significant findings with these two questions, it is important to point out that many of the cases were not closed at the time of case file review making it difficult to ascertain differences. Many of the variables collected that were analyzed trended in a positive direction for cases that were mediated. Since many of the cases were not closed at the time of case file review, additional research may help to understand the long term impacts of mediation.



Assessing
Mediation
in
Clark County,
NV

2013

RESEARCH REPORT
ASSESSING MEDIATION IN CLARK COUNTY,
NEVADA



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National Council of Juvenile and
Family Court Judges

Juvenile Law Programs

August 2013

The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges® (NCJFCJ) headquartered on the University of Nevada campus in Reno since 1969, provides cutting-edge training, wide-ranging technical assistance, and research to help the nation's courts, judges, and staff in their important work. Since its founding in 1937 by a group of judges dedicated to improving the effectiveness of the nation's juvenile courts, the NCJFCJ has pursued a mission to improve courts and systems practice and raise awareness of the core issues that touch the lives of many of our nation's children and families.

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Clark County Mediation

In early 2013, the Eighth Judicial District of Nevada (Clark County) began implementation of a mediation program for parents and stakeholders who are in the midst of the juvenile dependency system. The goal of mediation is to avoid further litigation through voluntary case resolution, which can enhance case processing and improve outcomes in juvenile dependency cases. Parties can come together in a neutral setting to address the issues surrounding the case and what options are available given the status of the case, through the assistance of an impartial third-party.

The Nevada Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) contracted the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) to assess the juvenile dependency mediation program. The assessment includes review of satisfaction surveys given to parents and stakeholders at the end of mediation and surveys and interviews with key system stakeholders. Surveys and interviews were analyzed to examine common themes, level of satisfaction with the current mediation practice, and areas for improvements.

Key findings from the surveys and interviews included:

- *There is a general perception that mediation is successful;*
- *The program is still new and working out issues as they come, keeping the process fluid; and*
- *Mediation provides an environment where parents felt heard, respected, and treated fairly during the process.*

Areas of improvement included:

- *Increasing stakeholder buy-in through education about the results that are seen through mediation in terms of time-savings;*
- *Exploring the idea of limiting how many parties are attending mediation sessions and limiting it to only necessary parties.*

The study was somewhat limited by the low number of survey respondents for the stakeholders and number of total mediations that have occurred to date. With low numbers, it is difficult to assess overall satisfaction with the program, as this report is limited to the views of those who participated in the survey and phone interviews. In addition to those limitations, long-term case outcomes were not determined in Clark County. Without this piece, it is difficult to determine the long-term outcomes of mediated cases or whether mediation results in timelier case processing. However, the current evaluation is the first step in this process. An outcome evaluation is planned for a future date, at a time in which the number of mediated cases is large enough to make adequate comparisons to non-mediated cases.

Introduction

When a child is removed from a home by child protective services (CPS), this child has entered the child abuse and neglect court system where an adversarial relationship between parents and CPS may develop. Distrust and confusion about the system can arise for parents in a time when there is a need for collaboration and resolution. Mediation is an option to avoid further litigation, which has been used for decades to catalyze case processing and improve outcomes in juvenile dependency cases.¹ This alternative dispute resolution practice is a method that brings together all concerned parties to negotiate and resolve issues with the assistance of a neutral third party (mediator). The main objective of mediation is to facilitate a discussion where parties voluntarily resolve the issues that brought a family into the dependency system and produce a written agreement, in lieu of a traumatic contested hearing.² The mediation can include parents, CPS, attorneys, and all others that may be involved in the case (i.e. guardian ad litem, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), foster parents, other family members, etc.).

The topics discussed depend largely on what issues are contested. If the mediation occurs pre-adjudication, topics may include petition allegations. Other contested issues that often arise and are discussed at mediation may include: case planning, custody, visitation, shared parental responsibility, temporary and long-term placement, foster care, relative placement, non-relative placement, shelter care, family dynamics, parent education, available services to families, family reunification, termination of parental rights, and/or adoption.³ Mediation should focus on the family's strengths, create an environment where parents are incorporated in decision making about their children, and prevent any further abuse or neglect for the child.² There are several potential benefits to mediation in child dependency cases which can include, but are not limited to: time savings, efficiency, parent engagement, and improved outcomes for children involved.

¹ Giovannucci, M., & Largent, K. (2009). A guide to effective child protection mediation: Lessons from 25 years of practice. *Family Court Review*, 47, 38-52.

² Superior Court of California, County of Alameda. (n.d.). *Dependency mediation*. Retrieved from: <http://www.alameda.courts.ca.gov/Resources/Documents/Dependency%20Mediation.pdf>

³ Eighth Judicial Circuit of Florida. (2013). *Frequently asked questions: Juvenile dependency*. Retrieved from: <http://circuit8.org/mediation/dependency-mediation>

Program Background

In October of 2012, the Eighth Judicial District of Nevada (Clark County) established the Dependency Mediation Program (DMP). DMP is funded by the Court Improvement Program (CIP), a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services program designed to support court initiatives related to improving outcomes for maltreated children involved in the child abuse and neglect court system.⁴ To secure the funding, the lead juvenile dependency judge in Clark County worked with the state CIP Coordinator to identify mediation as a goal for the jurisdiction and apply for grant funds. Three mediators with years of experience mediating a variety of issues were recruited for the program, and a contracted mediator of the Eighth Judicial District administers the program.

As part of the implementation process, systems stakeholders began convening monthly meetings to discuss and develop the program's goals, vision, protocols, and next steps. These discussions involved many key stakeholders, including: the lead juvenile dependency judge in Clark County; Department of Family Services personnel (staff, managers, and supervisor); the District Attorney; the Special Public Defender; Children's Attorney Project (CAP) attorneys; court appointed special advocates (CASAs); DMP mediators and administrator; a domestic violence consultant; and community service providers.

At the initial meeting, the lead judge explained that the DMP is the next step in bringing the Court's programs closer to nationally recognized "best practices." In addition, the desired outcomes of the DMP, the specific goals of the DMP, and the need for stakeholder training were discussed; draft mediation process documentation was provided; a glossary defining acronyms was proposed; and other areas of discussion (e.g., documents to be provided to mediators and staff participants, process of mediation, and level of mediation agreement) were addressed. At follow-up, pre-implementation meetings, topics included: potential start date; days, times, and locations for mediation; the process for providing case records to the mediator, as well as other pertinent documents to the other involved parties; training for mediators; revisions to informational brochures; issues to be mediated (e.g., petition language, visitation, case plan, and placement); and status checks. The meetings served as opportunities to examine what was and was not working and allowed the DMP administrator to make necessary adjustments, both to the implementation process, and to the mediation program as it progressed. For

⁴ Crowley, M. (2012). Dependency mediation. *Nevada Family Law Review*, 25, 12-17.

example, mediation was originally slated to start with termination of parental rights cases, but was adjusted to begin earlier in the cases (pre-adjudication).

One of the primary goals of these monthly, pre-implementation meetings (as well as the subsequent monthly post-implementation meetings) was to ensure that the program was poised to meet its six specific goals:

1. Mediate 65 cases during the initial year;
2. Achieve full or partial agreement in 75% of mediations;
3. For mediated cases, reduce the average time from petition to a permanency outcome that includes reunification, adoption or guardianship, to 18 months or less;
4. Ensure that 80% of the mediated cases in which agreement is reached come to a permanency outcome that includes reunification, adoption or guardianship;
5. Create a 33% reduction in the number of TPR actions awaiting trial;
6. For those cases in which the petition is denied, reduce the amount of time mediated cases spend in the subsequent court hearing or trial by at least 50%, from the current average of 3 hours.

At present, only one judge is ordering cases to mediation. All of the cases being ordered to mediation are early in the case process, and primarily include cases where parents deny the petition allegations. The date and time of the mediation session is set by the court, and formalized through a court order; participation by all parties to the case is mandatory. Three hours are set aside for each mediation session. The first mediation occurred February 2013.

On the day of mediation, the mediator provides an orientation for the parents and any parties new to process. The mediators give each parent a brief overview of the mediation process and parents then sign a confidentiality statement. Additionally, all parties sign a confidentiality statement prior to the mediation.

Mediators in Clark County use a facilitative group mediation model of mediation, a style of mediation that emphasizes the neutrality of the mediator. A facilitative mediator does not present his or her own

views of the case or of the agreement, and is instead focused on ensuring that all parties have an opportunity to be heard and that parties reach an agreement everyone can agree on.⁵

At the conclusion of a mediation session, the mediators use a laptop to write the agreement while all parties are in the same room. The agreement is printed, signed by those who have authority to do so, and each party receives a copy. The agreement is then entered into the electronic case management system and forwarded to the judge, who has to then sign the agreement and file a court order. All participants are then asked complete a short survey regarding their perceptions of the mediation, the outcome and how they were treated.

Study Overview

To assess the implementation and current functioning of the mediation program, an evaluation was conducted of the Clark County Mediation Program. The evaluation had several components, including a process evaluation that examined the implementation of the mediation program as well as its current functioning and a satisfaction evaluation that assess users' perceptions of the mediation program.

Process Evaluation

For the process evaluation, an online survey was sent to stakeholders involved with the juvenile dependency mediation program to learn more about implementation and current functioning. The survey was sent in March 2013. Follow-up interviews were conducted with key stakeholders to gain a more in-depth understanding of the program and provide additional context to the online survey results. The follow-up interviews were conducted in April – June of 2013. The process evaluation examines five research questions:

1. What were the challenges and successes with program implementation?
2. What could have improved the program implementation process?
3. Is the mediation program successfully engaging parents and stakeholders?
4. Does mediation save court time/reduce workload?
5. In what ways could the program be improved?

⁵ Imperati, S. J. (1997). Mediator practice models: The intersection of ethics and stylistic practices in mediation. *Willamette Law Review*, 33, 703-745.

Satisfaction Evaluation

As part of ongoing efforts to gauge program satisfaction, mediators give all mediation participants—parents and stakeholders—a survey after each mediation session. Participants are provided an envelope into which they are asked to place the completed survey. The sealed envelope is given to the lead judge’s judicial assistant and later mailed to NCJFCJ. This is to ensure confidentiality of responses. The satisfaction evaluation addresses four research questions:

1. How are parents treated during mediation sessions?
2. Do parents’ perceptions of treatment affect agreement rates?
3. Do stakeholders and parents perceive that mediation is helpful?
4. What did participants find most and least helpful about the mediation session?

Project staff provided NCJFCJ researchers with all of the satisfaction surveys collected from the first 10 mediations. This resulted in a sample of 77 surveys that were used to explore differences in perceptions between parents and stakeholders and answer the research questions.

Results

Process Evaluation

Twelve stakeholders (60%) responded to the online survey. Eleven respondents indicated their role (Table 1).

Table 1. Role of Respondents		
	N	%
Administrator	0	0.0
Attorney	4	36.4
Social Work Supervisor	0	0.0
Child Advocate	3	27.3
Mediator	3	27.3
Judge	1	9.1
Total	11	100.00

Eleven respondents indicated how many mediation sessions they attend per month on average. Sixty-three percent of the respondents (n=7) said they attend one to two mediation sessions per month,

18.2% (n=2) attend three to four, and 9.1% (n=1) attend 5 or more per month. The remaining 9.1% (n=1) indicated they never attend mediation sessions.

Implementation

To understand how the mediation program was implemented, stakeholders involved in the implementation process answered the following questions in the online survey:

- What were the barriers or challenges in implementation?
- What were the strengths in implementation?
- Were there things that you believe could have been done to expedite the implementation or improve the implementation process?

Barriers to Implementation. In Clark County, program start up activities lasted approximately four months; the program was funded to begin in October of 2012 and the first mediation occurred in February of 2013. The delay was due to several reasons: another transition in the juvenile court, concerns from community partners about the sustainability of the program, initial lack of staffing and resources, resistance from stakeholders, disagreements about mediation timing in a case, logistical and administrative issues, engagement and creating buy-in, and conflicting priorities in Family Court.

Strengths of Implementation. Participants were also asked what worked well during project start up. Respondents cited the communication and initial outreach between mediators and stakeholders played a key role. Stakeholders and partners were able to express their concerns openly which allowed for a flexible and dynamic situation. This created a state where the program could be fluid and change as stakeholders saw it appropriate. It also fostered an environment for buy-in, and allowed an opportunity to educate partners on the benefits of a mediation program. Other elements important to program implementation success were stakeholder buy-in, collaboration, team building, judicial leadership, commitment to the program, and shadowing Washoe County mediation program.

Areas of Improvement. Participants were asked what could have been done to improve the implementation process. Respondents cited bad timing and slow start-up as things that could have improved the implementation process. Other suggestions included starting meetings with partners earlier, introducing the program to stakeholders prior to implementation, and more concrete start dates to keep all parties accountable to the start date.

Program Goal

When asked what the goal of the dependency mediation program is, several respondents said the primary goal of the program is to achieve permanency for families and children in the child welfare court system in an expedited manner, which is safe and best for the children involved. Others said that mediation acted as an alternative to court and a way to engage families. Survey participants indicated that mediation gave a forum for all parties to negotiate and resolve conflicts in a “solution-oriented” process with improved outcomes. Participants also noted that mediation saves the court time and resources. The quote below is from one respondent and the statement describes the objective of the mediation program.

“To change the ‘culture’ of the child welfare system from the traditional litigation mindset to a family-driven, family-supportive mindset in order to achieve permanency for the children in a more timely manner.”

Program Functioning

Survey participants were asked to rate their level of agreement on several response items related to implementation, participation, and effects of mediation. Table 2 presents the results for all responses along a five-point scale, with 1 being “strongly disagree” and 5 being “strongly agree.” Higher numbers, therefore, indicate more agreement with the statement.

Table 2. Average Response Ratings	
The implementation of the mediation program was a success (n=10)	2.9
All stakeholders who are invited attend mediation sessions (n=10)	4.1
Parents, who are invited, attend mediation sessions (n=10)	4.3
Mediation sessions are successful in reaching agreements (n=10)	4.2
Parents at mediation sessions are engaged in the process (n=10)	4.9
Mediation reduces the time to case resolution (n=10)	3.2
All stakeholders at mediation sessions are prepared (n=10)	3.7
All stakeholders at mediation sessions work toward reaching agreement (n=10)	3.9
Parents at mediation sessions work toward reaching agreement (n=10)	4.3
Mediation is a good alternative to court (n=10)	4.2
All stakeholders get a voice at mediation sessions (n=10)	4.8
Parents get a voice during mediation session (n=10)	4.9
Age appropriate children are invited to attend mediations (n=10)	4.6

As shown in the above table, the average response for most items ranged between somewhat agree and strongly agree. Some notable exceptions are that respondents indicated less agreement with “The implementation of the mediation program was a success” and “Mediation reduces the time to case

resolution.” Most of the survey participants who answered the question “Parents get a voice during mediation sessions” strongly agreed.

Participants were also asked several open ended questions, which are answered below.

What are the barriers to utilizing mediation for parents?

In terms of barriers for parents, one respondent noted that adequate attorney representation is critical. Many respondents noted that time and transportation are issues for parents who are typically low income, lacking resources, or possibly incarcerated. It may be hard for them to take three hours off work or find child care to attend mediation and therefore choose not to attend. One respondent noted that caseworkers do not always locate and offer transportation to reluctant parents. Some respondents noted that parental education of mediation is important so that parents understand the purpose of mediation. Many respondents noted that they did not see any immediate barriers for parent engagement at this time.

What are the barriers to utilizing mediation for stakeholders?

Barriers for stakeholders included lack of resources, time, and a commitment to the program. Some respondents said that there is a shortage of staff at agencies and this can make it difficult to balance caseloads with mediation. Other stakeholders believe that mediation creates duplicate work and actually adds to workload. Another barrier cited was a lack of cooperation and willingness to mediate as opposed to litigate. For instance, one respondent noted that when the Safety Assessment Tool by the Department of Family Services (DFS) was mentioned in mediation, it is often ignored and is viewed negatively by other stakeholders. A second respondent indicated that the DA’s office may discourage their client from taking a particular position, making it difficult for CPS workers to fully participate.

In moving forward with the mediation program, what are some ways in which the program could be improved?

Areas for improvement included reducing the amount of time for stakeholders in mediation, training and engagement of stakeholders, and continuing to modify the process as necessary. A few respondents felt that most, if not all, dependency cases should be referred to mediation, which would demonstrate the courts’ commitment to the mediation and not litigation of these cases. Some also felt that mediation should not be in *addition to*, but *instead of* court, which would reduce overall time for the case. One respondent would like to see a shorter time between ordering the mediation and when it occurs.

Training and education for all stakeholders was cited as a strategy for ongoing improvement, as it would help attorneys who may be more comfortable litigating. One respondent felt that the mediators should be more involved during the mediation process. The need to continue to adjust the program as concerns are raised was pointed out by a few respondents. Some felt the program is still very new and did not know exactly how the program could be improved at this time. One respondent thought the program should be discontinued.

Workload

Survey participants were asked how mediation affected their workload. The answers are reported in Table 3.

Table 3. Mediation and Workload	
Mediation reduces my workload (n=10)	2.6
Mediation requires the same amount of time as going to court (n=10)	2.5
Mediation adds to my workload (n=10)	3.9

As shown above, the average answer from participants regarding reduction of workload was between “neither agree nor disagree” and “somewhat disagree.” The average answer regarding increases to workload was “somewhat agree.” The respondents “somewhat disagreed” that mediation requires the same amount of time as going to court. This indicates most responded felt that mediation increased their workload.

Additional Comments regarding workload included:

- I have no doubt that mediation, in the long run, will definitely lower my workload and result in better outcomes for the children by engaging the family and others in arriving at solutions instead of being told what the family needs to do in order to have the children returned.
- When all the parties come to the table in good faith with a collaborative attitude and are prepared, mediation often results in an agreement, which reduces the stakeholders' workload.

Follow Up Interviews

Six in-depth interviews were conducted with mediators and other juvenile dependency stakeholders to get a better sense of how the program was implemented, how it is currently working, and any areas for improvement. Interview participants were asked specifically about the barriers and successes related to program implementation, challenges, improvement areas, parent and stakeholder engagement, and

benefits of the program. (Questions are listed below in blue.) The themes that arose from the interviews were similar to the responses found in the online survey and although there were several different questions asked, the same issues seemed to appear in different questions.

What did you see as barriers to implementing the mediation program?

- *Inadequate buy-in from stakeholders.* The mediation program is new and may be seen as time consuming compared to going to court. Initially, there was resistance from attorneys about mediation and some see it as time wasted. There was a previous mediation program in Clark County and they did not successfully demonstrate the long term benefits to families and the system, therefore this program may be seen in the same light. There may be “initiative fatigue” on the part of stakeholders in the system.
- *Fragmented framework.* Some participants stated that the unclear framework in the beginning was a barrier because this created confusion about the process and expectations. A number of the mediations have many social workers in attendance and there is some role confusion between investigators and permanency workers. There may need to be an exploration of who needs to attend and who does not.
- *Adversarial environment.* Although the purpose of mediation is to create a non-adversarial environment, in some situations this still exists. Stakeholders noted they felt the purpose of mediation is to get children out of the system faster and that all parties need to be reasonable in their expectations. This confrontational style can create walls between parties and unnecessarily lengthen the process.

What did you see as successes to implementing the mediation program?

- *Successful outcomes.* In the short time that mediations have occurred in Clark County, they have been relatively successful. The large majority of cases have reached either full or partially agreement. The informal feedback from stakeholders involved in those cases has been positive.
- *Dynamic and flexible environment.* This program continues to improve through meetings with all partners. At these meetings concerns are brought up and addressed, which keeps this program fluid in nature and ever-adjusting for quality improvement.

What are the biggest challenges to reaching an agreement?

- *Lack of cooperation of parties.* The juvenile dependency system in Clark County has functioned

in its capacity for many years and this mediation program can create a situation that may challenge some parties' old way of dealing in the child welfare system. All parties need to understand each other roles in order to work together as a team to get the families the help they need. All parties also need to come to the table willing to compromise.

- *Large number of people at mediation, possibly not appropriate for facilitative model.* As stated previously, there are many individuals at the mediation table, each with their own roles and responsibilities. Having so many stakeholders involved makes reaching an agreement difficult. Stakeholders have different visions for the case, all with competing interests. This can create a chaotic environment that can result in a breakdown in the agreement. Based on the model of mediation used, this may not be the best scenario. Some respondents noted that there are issues brought to mediation that cannot be mediated, such as placing a child back home with a parent who still has major safety issues to address.
- *Adversarial propensity.* Some in the mediation process still have the desire to litigate rather than reach an agreement outside of court. There can be unwillingness to compromise and some participants are coming into mediation very positioned.

What do you see as areas of the program that need improvement?

- *More directive mediators.* Some participants noted that mediators should be more pro-active and less passive mediators. Stakeholders would like to see the mediators move the conversations and enhance their skills. It would also be beneficial for mediators to understand the role of all stakeholders.
- *Systematic approach to improving mediation.* The Clark County mediation program is currently working and engaging partners in how to tighten up mediation. As discussed previously, there are many people at the mediation table and this creates a challenging and chaotic environment.
- *Limiting the number of attorneys present.* A proposed idea to mediation is limiting the role of the attorneys to just the legal issues, such as petition language. The idea is that parties may engage the family faster if they are more selective in what the attorneys are included in. The Clark County mediation program is exploring a similar model that is used in Santa Clara, CA.
- *Solution-focused problem solving approach.* It was suggested that parties be more sensitive toward parents and their approach to mediation. The primary focus should be on problem solving.

How could parent engagement with the mediation process be improved?

- *Less accusatory environment.* To ensure that parents stay engaged in the mediation process, it is important to create an environment that is less accusatory towards the parents. It is important to be aware of body language and the words used. A wall goes up with parents when you use words like “You did this or that.”
- *Current satisfaction with parent engagement.* Some stakeholders noted that parent engagement was a current strength of the program and did not feel as if this area needed strong attention. The parents are encouraged to invite people in their lives to the process.
- *Chaotic environment can impact families.* As noted several times, there are many people at the table during mediation and that can create a chaotic environment that is not linear in nature. This can impact the parents’ experience with mediation. It may be necessary to identify the decision makers at the table and limit the discussion role to these individuals.
- *Better education for parents.* Prior to their mediation session, it is essential to educate parents so they can learn how mediation is different from court—parents do not know the process and do not know what to expect. Helping these parents initially in the process is important.

How could stakeholder engagement with the mediation process be improved?

- *Development of stakeholder buy-in.* In order to improve stakeholder engagement with the mediation process, participants discussed the importance of buy-in and the need for a consistent feedback loop between the mediators and stakeholders. Stakeholder understanding of the long-term goals of the program could use some improvement.
- *Invite additional community partners to the table.* Some respondents felt it would be helpful to have drug treatment partners available during these discussions. In addition, respondents suggested that it would be useful to have some peer model programs available for parents to advocate their position better.
- *Improved reporting system and information sharing.* Stakeholders would like to know more about the mediation program and would like to see data that demonstrates time savings. Positive results from mediations would encourage stakeholders to stay vested in the program. There have been similar programs in Clark County that were unsuccessful, so there is a fear that

this program may not work out either. Quarterly reports that could be easily adapted and disseminated to stakeholders were suggested.

- *Current satisfaction with stakeholder mediation.* Some participants said they are happy with the engagement by family services, CASA, and domestic violence (DV) partners.

What they find the most beneficial about mediation?

- *Creation of cooperative relationships.* Having people come to better working relationships is invaluable. Mediation especially improves relationship between parents and social workers, and creates more cooperation between parents and agency.
- *Early engagement with family.* Engaging the family early in the case can alleviate issues later. Some people noted that working with DFS early in the case benefits their clients and keeps all parties accountable to the agreement reached in mediation. Social workers also like seeing the families early in the case and being able to ask them non-confrontational questions.

Satisfaction Evaluation

After a mediation session, all participants are given satisfaction surveys. The surveys ask parents and other family members to indicate their perceptions of how they were treated and involved during the mediation session, along with the level of agreement. The surveys ask stakeholders to indicate where the case stands in the dependency process, their perceptions of how they were treated and involved and whether the session was conducted fairly. The surveys ask all participants to note what was most and least helpful about the mediation session.

Level of Agreement

The surveys asked participants to indicate whether the mediation session resulted in full, partial, or no agreement. It is difficult to report the agreement rate from the satisfaction surveys. Out of the 10 mediations, all participants indicated the same level of agreement in only 3 sessions (30%). In the remaining mediations, participants marked different levels of agreement. For example, in one session, four participants marked “no agreement” and one participant marked “partial agreement.” The discrepancy in agreement levels could indicate a breakdown in communication as to the formal level of agreement in the majority of mediation sessions. Despite the discrepancy, 39% of participants indicated that the mediation resulted in full agreement (see Table 4).

Table 4. Level of Agreement		
	N	%
No	12	16
Partial	35	45
Full	30	39
Missing	0	0
Total	77	100

Parental treatment and participation during mediation sessions

Twenty-four of the 77 mediation participants were biological parents, extended family members, or children. All were asked if the mediator explained the process so they knew what to expect. The majority “strongly agreed” with that statement (56.5%). Participants were also asked if they had a chance to voice their opinion and if they were treated with respect. A majority of respondents “strongly agreed” that they had a chance to voice their opinion and were treated with respect (57% and 62%, respectively). There was no substantive difference when biological parents’ responses were analyzed separately. All parents were also asked if they felt listened to during the mediation. The majority of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed (42% and 54%). Parents were asked if they were a part of finding answers to problems discussed; 59% agreed and 36% strongly agreed. Finally, when asked if the mediator treated everyone fairly, 54% of parents strongly agreed. See Table 5, below, for percentages across all questions and response categories.

Table 5. Parental Treatment and Involvement (Percent)					
	No, Strongly Disagree	No, Disagree	Yes, Agree	Yes, Strongly Agree	Missing
The mediator explained the mediation process clearly	0.0	0.0	43.5	56.5	0
Did you have chance to voice your opinion?	0.0	4.2	54.2	41.6	0
Were you treated with respect?	0.0	0.0	41.7	58.3	0
Were you really listened to?	0.0	4.2	45.8	50	0.0
Were you able to be a part of finding answers to problems?	0.0	4.5	59.1	36.4	0.0
Did the mediator treat everyone fairly?	0.0	0.0	41.7	54.2	4.2

Do stakeholders and parents perceive that mediation is helpful?

Even in instances where no agreement was reached, many stakeholders and parents indicated that mediation was helpful. The survey asked parents and stakeholders if they thought the agreement would work. Forty-three (67%) answered the question. The majority of respondents who answered the question said “yes,” while 22% were “unsure” or “hoped so.” No party said the agreement would not work.

Most and least helpful about mediation

What participants found most helpful about mediation was the opportunity for all parties to gather at the same table, share information and talk openly in a neutral, non-hostile, and respectful environment. Other benefits to mediation were learning about the positions of other parties, having a DV advocate present, visitation discussions, engaging in problem solving, reaching compromises, and allowing parties, especially parents, to express their opinions—all within an environment that is less stressful than court.

What participants found least helpful about mediation were instances where discussion would get off topic or too focused on irrelevant issues, tension between parties, parties unwilling to compromise, and unprepared parties.

Overall, mediation in dependency cases (in Clark County) is positive with some lessons learned during the implementation phase. In general, both parents and stakeholders agreed that mediation is successful. Stakeholders agreed that mediation lessened their workload in preparation and hearings, and is a good alternative to court. Parents also agreed that they felt heard, respected, and treated fairly during the process. When parents felt part of the process and when the mediators clearly explained the process, this was associated with a higher level of agreement.

Discussion

The mediation program in Clark County, NV had some delays with implementation. While the program was slated to begin in October of 2012, the first mediation was not held until February of 2013. The delay was due to logistical concerns, transitions in the juvenile court, and inadequate buy-in from system stakeholders. While mediation did finally begin, it appears that some of these concerns persist within the system. Responses from stakeholders do indicate that there is insufficient buy-in to the program, with many believing it will not be effective in meeting its goals, and others believing it actually adds to their workload. These implementation barriers may be contributing to the low number of mediations that have occurred. Further, changes in the child abuse and neglect court system may also

be serving as system barriers. The lead judge was the only judge referring to dependency mediation and this was occurring when the parents entered a plea regarding the petition allegations. Recent structural changes to the court process have changed so that the lead judge now does not oversee this portion of the case. The result is that between May 4 and June 30, only three cases were referred to mediation, one of which was cancelled.

It does appear that once cases are sent to mediation, that the result is primarily positive. According to stakeholder perceptions, 84% of mediations have resulted in full or partial agreement. Stakeholders indicated that the mediation is beneficial in engaging parents in the system. Survey responses support this, as parents who participated felt that they had a voice in the system, were treated with respect, and were listened to. Overall, the system seems to be effective in engaging parents and creating cooperative relationships between parties.

The program also appears to be doing well in terms of continuous quality improvement (CQI). The program administrator has definitely embraced a CQI focus and has worked diligently to make needed modifications to the program as concerns arise. As evidenced by the monthly meetings (which are still ongoing), several issues have arisen which required changes to the program, either logistics, or program implementation. The program administrator has followed up with key system stakeholders whenever concerns arose and worked with the entire committee to come up with timely and effective resolutions. While there are still kinks in the system, many improvements have already been made to ensure that mediation began and was meeting the needs of the parents *and* the stakeholders. The program should be commended for its flexibility and desire to make the necessary adjustments to improve implementation and functioning. These efforts should continue until the program is fully embraced and meeting all of its goals.

Recommendations for Program Improvements

The findings of the process and satisfaction evaluation allowed for the generation of some recommendations for program improvements. These recommendations are meant to help guide discussions of ways that the program could be improved, but are also important to provide context and useful information to new sites that may be struggling with or in the process of establishing their own mediation programs. The recommendations listed below include the areas of implementation and startup as well as considerations for improving current practice.

Implementation Lessons Learned & Recommendations

1. *Education and Outreach Are Important.* Program startup should include education and outreach to all stakeholders who may/should be involved in the mediation. Clark County did a good job of bringing multiple systems stakeholders to the table for the monthly meetings. An additional educational piece might be effective in helping stakeholders to understand the importance of mediation. This may include a one-page research summary of the benefits of mediation in child abuse proceedings and/ or dissemination of a report of findings from a similar jurisdiction that has implemented a mediation program.
2. *Buy-In From All Stakeholders Will Help Encourage Mediations.* Even if project partners are educated about the benefits of mediation, mediation may not be successful if key professional stakeholders do not believe the program is beneficial and useful. Engaging in meaningful discussions about the benefits of mediation may help to improve buy-in.
3. *Referrals to Mediation Need To Be Consistent.* While Clark County is a large jurisdiction, very few referrals to mediation have occurred in the project period. Judges and Masters who are committed to the program need to ensure that referrals are consistently being made. If the plan of the program is that all parents who deny petition allegations are referred to mediation, then judicial officers who oversee these hearing types must consistently make these referrals. Again, this will be critical in evaluating the effectiveness of the program. Without a sufficient number of mediations, comparisons cannot be made to determine effectiveness.

Improving Process & Recommendations for Next Steps

4. *Ensure All Parties Understand the Agreement.* Satisfaction surveys revealed that the parties involved did not always have the same perception of the level of agreement that was reached. It is important that *all* persons understand whether full agreement was reached. In particular, this is important for parents, to ensure that they know what occurred at the mediation and what the next steps are in the case.
5. *Ongoing Education & Outreach.* Education and outreach should not stop with implementation. There is a high rate of turnover for many of the professional stakeholders involved in the child welfare system. Continuing education and outreach efforts will ensure that new stakeholders are familiar with the program. One potential outlet in Clark for this continued education may be the Model Court collaborative meetings that occur periodically.


6. *Generate Buy-In & Stress Importance for Research Efforts.* Project partners should be made aware of the necessity of buy-in as an important piece in ensuring the program can be evaluated. Resistance may be because stakeholders do not believe in the program or feel that it will add to their workload. If stakeholders understand that research can provide these answers to them, *but only* if they give the program a real chance to work, this could increase buy-in. Further, the lack of buy-in reduces the overall number of mediations and may reduce its effectiveness. Better buy-in from stakeholders can help to ensure program fidelity.
7. *Continue with CQI Efforts.* The program administrator has done a good job of trying to identify challenges to successful implementation of the mediation program. Problems with the program still exist and must be addressed to ensure necessary adjustments are being made that will make mediation successful in Clark County.
8. *Share Results.* A summary of the mediation reports might be useful to share with system stakeholders in order to increase buy-in and to demonstrate the positive results of mediation. At a minimum, identifying the number of the mediations held, the agreement rate, and the amount or percentage of time this results in vacated hearings would be interesting to stakeholders and could help with outreach and buy-in of other stakeholders in the process.

Conclusion

Although the Clark County DMP was delayed in implementation and has held very few mediations to date, it does appear to be successful in meeting some of its goals. Eighty-four percent of mediations have resulted in full or partial agreement (per perceptions of users). The parents appear to be engaged in the system. Parents feel like they have a voice and are part of the decision-making process. Most stakeholders also feel that mediation is successful in increasing cooperation among parties and engaging parents.

The program, however, does have areas for improvement. In particular, stakeholder buy-in and the referral process could be improved to ensure that cases are being referred and that all parties involved believe that the mediation process can be helpful. It is difficult to draw broader conclusions as this study was limited in scope by the number of mediations that have occurred and the limited stakeholder perspectives (as some had only been to 1 or 2 mediations). This research could easily be expanded when more cases have been mediated. The expanded research could help to confirm or clarify the current findings and provide additional context. Future research should also examine the outcomes of

the case to determine if workload is higher for mediated cases and if mediation is successful in improving outcomes for the child and families involved.



Process
Evaluation of
Mediation in
the Fifth
Judicial
District, NV

RESEARCH REPORT

PROCESS EVALUATION OF MEDIATION IN
THE FIFTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT, NEVADA



NATIONAL COUNCIL OF
JUVENILE AND FAMILY
COURT JUDGES

JUVENILE LAW PROGRAMS

FEBRUARY 2014

The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges® (NCJFCJ) headquartered on the University of Nevada campus in Reno since 1969, provides cutting-edge training, wide-ranging technical assistance, and research to help the nation's courts, judges, and staff in their important work. Since its founding in 1937 by a group of judges dedicated to improving the effectiveness of the nation's juvenile courts, the NCJFCJ has pursued a mission to improve courts and systems practice and raise awareness of the core issues that touch the lives of many of our nation's children and families.

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Fifth Judicial District Mediation

In early 2013, the Fifth Judicial District of Nevada (Nye, Mineral and Esmeralda Counties) implemented a mediation program for parents and stakeholders involved in the child abuse and neglect (dependency) system. The overarching goal of mediation is to avoid further litigation through voluntary case resolution, which can enhance case processing and improve outcomes in juvenile dependency cases. Parties can come together to address the issues surrounding the case and what options are available given the status of the case, through the assistance of a neutral third-party.

Through a contract with Nevada Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) conducted an assessment of the juvenile dependency mediation program. The assessment included a process and satisfaction evaluation. The mediation program in the 5th judicial district is fairly new and has currently mediated fewer than ten cases. It appeared there were initial issues with the referral process and a new referral protocol was implemented. This new protocol includes direct referrals to mediation from the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS). The courts have approved this protocol which no longer requires a court order, but court ordered mediations are still accepted.

The dependency mediation program in the 5th Judicial District (NV) is still in the initial phases and adjusting according to needs. The process evaluation demonstrated promising results for this new program. The mediation program could consider monitoring long-term outcomes of cases that have been mediated and compare to those that have not been to understand how mediation can impact a case from start to finish. Key findings and recommendations from the evaluation are listed below.

KEY FINDINGS

- Parental engagement in the program has been productive and positive
- Overall positive attitudes about mediation program from stakeholders and parents
- Parents felt respected and heard during the mediation sessions
- Lack of buy-in from defense attorneys
- Referral process issues and adjustments

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Additional training and education opportunities to help stakeholders understand mediation and its purpose to build buy-in
- Employ SMART Objectives when setting yearly goals and objectives
- Increase the number of cases referred to mediation from child welfare agency and court
- Judicial leadership to ensure a successful program
- Explore utilizing mediations in other points in the case instead of only at the initial phases
- Long term follow up study to examine outcomes

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Introduction

Distrust, anger, and confusion are common feelings that parents may have when their children are removed from home by child protection services (CPS) due to allegations of child abuse and neglect. An adversarial relationship may develop and the need for collaboration and resolution are evident. Mediation may be an option to get to a resolution. Mediation has been used for decades to improve case processing and outcomes in juvenile dependency (child abuse and neglect) cases.¹ Alternative dispute resolution, such as mediation, brings together all concerned parties to negotiate and resolve issues with the assistance of a neutral third party (mediator). Facilitating a discussion where parties voluntarily resolve the issues that brought a family into the dependency system and produce a written agreement, in lieu of a traumatic contested hearing can be a productive alternative to litigation.² Parents, CPS, attorneys, and all others that may be involved in the case (e.g., guardian ad litem, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), foster parents, other family members, etc.) can be involved in the mediation session.

The topics discussed may include: petition allegations, case planning, custody, visitation, shared

BENEFITS OF MEDIATION IN JUVENILE DEPENDENCY CASES

- Time savings for attorneys, courts and social workers
- Parental engagement
- Focus on family strengths
- Non-adversarial environment
- Alternative to litigation
- Improved outcomes for children and families

parental responsibility, temporary and long-term placement, foster care, relative placement, non-relative placement, shelter care, family dynamics, parent education, available services to families, family reunification, termination of parental rights, and/or adoption.³ Focusing on the family's strengths, creating an environment where parents are part of decision making about their children, and preventing any further abuse or neglect for the child should be the main objectives of mediation in juvenile dependency cases.² Time savings, efficiency, parent engagement, and improved outcomes for children involved are all potential benefits of mediation.

¹ Giovannucci, M., and Largent, K. (2009). A guide to effective child protection mediation: Lessons from 25 years of practice. *Family Court Review*, 47, 38-52.

² Superior Court of California, County of Alameda. *Dependency Mediation*. Retrieved from: <http://www.alameda.courts.ca.gov/Resources/Documents/Dependency%20Mediation.pdf>

³ Eighth Judicial Circuit of Florida. *Frequently Asked Questions: Juvenile Dependency*. Retrieved from: <http://circuit8.org/mediation/dependency-mediation>

Time-savings may occur for courts, attorneys, and social workers, through the avoidance of further litigation and trial preparation.⁴ Although mediation can take several hours to resolve, this can save the courts countless hours and provide more time for other cases to be processed. The mediation process may enhance parental engagement. Before mediation, a parent may feel a range of emotions (angry, distrustful, confused) that their child has been removed from their home, but after they may leave feeling empowered with a better understanding of the child welfare agency and the dependency process. If mediation is conducted by an experienced professional, in a confidential and respectful place,² it can foster an environment where parents feel they can be honest because it will not be used against them. Resolution (either full or partial) can be quite common and may result in faster case progression, and ultimately may result in shorter times to permanency for children and families.

Although benefits to mediation are ample, there are limitations, which include no-show parents, disjointed buy-in from stakeholders, and lack of facilitation skills on the part of mediators. With careful evaluation of each court's mediation process, many of these limitations can be mitigated with improved outcomes for the dependency system. For this reason, it is important to assess mediation programs, both in terms of the process of the mediation program, determining if it is being implemented as expected, and the outcomes of evaluation in terms of how it may meet case goals.

Program Background

In early 2013, the Fifth Judicial District (5th JD) of Nevada (Nye, Esmeralda, and Mineral Counties) established a juvenile dependency mediation program. This new program is funded by the Court Improvement Program (CIP), a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services program designed to support court initiatives related to improving outcomes for maltreated children involved in the court system.⁵ The 5th JD's Community Improvement Council (CIC) was instrumental in program start-up and implementation efforts. One mediator with many years of experience mediating a variety of issues was recruited for the program, and the program is administered in part by Nye County staff. The program has held a total of five mediations to date and more are scheduled in the future. The program has confidentiality and domestic violence protocols in place. The initial objective was to mediate a total of 20 cases within the first year.

⁴ Summers, A., Wood, S. and Russell, J. (2011) Assessing Efficiency and Workload Implications of the King County Mediation Pilot. *OJJDP Journal of Juvenile Justice*, 1, 48-59. Retrieved from: <http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/King%20County%20Mediation%20Pilot%20Article.pdf>

⁵ Crowley, M. (2012). Dependency Mediation. *Nevada Family Law Review*, 25, 12-17.

PROCESS EVALUATION RESULTS

The Nevada Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) contracted the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) to conduct an assessment of the juvenile dependency mediation program in the Fifth Judicial District of Nevada (Nye, Mineral and Esmeralda Counties). As the program is in its early stages, an outcome evaluation was not feasible, but may be useful moving forward. A process evaluation was conducted to assess the strengths and challenges the program implementation experienced. The current study seeks to answer the following questions.

Process Evaluation

1. What were the challenges and successes with program implementation?
2. What could have improved the program implementation process?
3. Is the mediation program successfully engaging parents and stakeholders?
4. Does mediation save court time/reduce workload?
5. In what ways could the program be improved?

Satisfaction Evaluation

1. How are parents treated during mediation sessions?
2. Do stakeholders and parents perceive that mediation as helpful?
3. What did participants find most and least helpful about the mediation session?

For the process evaluation, an online survey was sent to stakeholders involved with the juvenile dependency mediation program to learn more about successes and challenges with program implementation, how the program is currently functioning, mediation utilization barriers, how mediation affects workload, and how the program can be improved in the future. Follow-up interviews with stakeholders were conducted to gain a full understanding of program implementation and functioning.

As part of ongoing efforts to gauge program satisfaction, the mediator gives all mediation participants—parents and stakeholders—a survey after each mediation session. Participants are asked to place their completed surveys in an envelope to ensure confidentiality. The survey asks participants whether an agreement was reached, if participants had opportunities to voice their opinions and be a part of problem resolution, if participants felt like they had been treated with respect and truly listened to, if the mediation session was conducted fairly, if they believed the mediated agreement would work, and what they found the most and least helpful. Satisfaction surveys (n =28) were given to NCJFCJ researchers to explore perceptions of parents and stakeholders and answer the research questions.

PROCESS EVALUATION RESULTS

To assess the mediation process, researchers administered an online survey to system stakeholders and conducted follow-up in-depth interviews with key mediation participants (i.e., mediators, attorneys, etc.). The online survey was sent to child welfare stakeholders and mediators in December, 2013. Seven responded to the online survey and indicated their role (Table 1).

Seven respondents indicated how many mediation sessions they attend per month on average. Over half of the respondents (57.1%) said they attend one to two mediation sessions per month. The remaining 42.9% indicated they never attend mediation sessions.

	N	%
Administrator	3	42.9
Agency Attorney	2	28.6
Parent's Attorney	0	0.0
Social Work Supervisor	0	0.0
Child Advocate	1	14.3
Mediator	1	14.3
Total	7	100

Implementation

To understand how the mediation program was implemented, stakeholders involved in the implementation process answered the following questions in the online survey:

- What were the barriers or challenges in implementation?
- What were the strengths in implementation?
- Were there things that could have been done to improve the implementation process?

Implementation Strengths & Barriers

In the Fifth Judicial District, the Dependency Mediation Program (DMP) was expected to begin in April 2013. The first mediation took place on April 11, 2013. Seventy-five percent of respondents of the online survey said they believed the program started on-time. An official contract was established in May of 2013 between Nye County District Attorney's office and the DMP administrator.

Worked Well

Participants were asked what worked well during project start up. Survey participants were asked to rate stakeholder buy-in at the beginning of program start-up. Fifty percent of respondents rated the start-up as "Excellent", while 25% rated it as "Good." Twenty-five percent of respondents rated start up as "Fair" and were asked to explain why. There were no explanations provided as to why it was rated this way. No

"THERE HAVE ONLY BEEN 5 CASES MEDIATED, AND MOST VIEWED BY SOME PARTNERS AS 'NOT RESOLVABLE'. AGREEMENTS WERE REACHED IN ALL CASES."

PROCESS EVALUATION RESULTS

respondents rated the start-up as “Poor.”

When the question was posed “do you believe that everyone that should have been involved with program start-up activities was involved,” respondents were split 50/50. Those who said not everyone was not involved, cited a lack of defense attorneys’ participation and social workers.

Strengths

Participants were asked what strengths they saw during implementation. Among those who answered the question, respondents cited that Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS) and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) were very involved. There was a strong commitment from stakeholders to identify an alternative means to resolve challenges in child welfare. Good communication and enthusiasm for the program were also cited as strength to program implementation.

Barriers

Participants were also asked to identify barriers and challenges to program implementation. Two respondents acknowledged lack of public defender participation and buy-in as major challenges to program start-up. There was a lag time in understanding how the program would work, which is to be expected with implementation of a new program. The lack of cases being referred to mediation was identified as a barrier to implementation.

Improving Implementation Process

Participants were asked what could have been done to improve the implementation process. Responses varied from unreasonable implementation goals, awareness of staff members, and participation from the defense attorneys. During program start up, goals and objectives are established in order to evaluate

PROGRAM GOALS

Respondents were asked to explain the program goals. Their answers included:

- “To help get the cases closed sooner.”
- “To help participants reach a better understanding of each other’s position in regards to reaching reunification.”
- “To help resolve child protection case issues.”
- “The DMP was developed as an alternative to trial, based on the premise that a confidential conversation with all parties may result in improved outcomes for the family and a savings in court time and expense.”
- “To reach an understanding with all parties on the things that needs to be done in order to bring this action to a swift close.”
- “To increase timely permanency for children placed out of home and thus reduce trauma on the children. Additionally, shorter case span will reduce use of court and community resources.”

PROCESS EVALUATION RESULTS

outcomes during a specific time frame. It is important to ensure that these goals are attainable, appropriate, and within the control and influence of the program. In the 5th Judicial District, the initial goal of the dependency mediation program was to mediate 20 new cases within the first year from start-up. A recommendation would be to have included new cases entering the system, but also identify older cases that are already under court supervision.

Policies and Procedures

Respondents identified specific policies and procedures related to the dependency mediation program. There are policies related to the referral process and how session should be conducted. In addition, there are policies around confidentiality and how agreements should be written. Sixty-six percent of respondents believed the policies/procedures were being followed and the other 33.3% responded “Other.” The other response: referrals to mediation are not as frequent as could be helpful to families in conflict with the child welfare agency.

The dependency mediation program in the 5th Judicial District does have Domestic Violence Protocol. This protocol provides the steps that are needed to ensure safety for the victim and that their rights are protected during mediation. It assumes the responsibility of ascertaining if domestic violence is present in a case is held by Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS). If DCFS identifies domestic violence in a dependency case, they will need to inform the mediation program. If domestic violence is involved, options are provided to the victim including: holding separate sessions for victim and perpetrator, inviting an advocate to the session, the victim’s attorney can serve as advocate, or any other options that are introduced from stakeholders and/or victim. The protocol does state that domestic violence itself will never be mediated.

Program Functioning

Survey participants were asked to rate their level of agreement on several response items related to implementation, participation, and effects of mediation. Table 2 presents the results for all responses along a five-point scale, with 1 being “strongly disagree” and 5 being “strongly agree.” The higher numbers indicate more agreement with the statement.

Table 2. Average Response Ratings	
Mediations sessions are successful in reaching agreements. (n=6)	4.17
Mediation reduces the time to case resolution. (n=6)	4.00
The implementation of the mediation program was a success. (n=6)	3.67

PROCESS EVALUATION RESULTS

Mediation is a good alternative to court. (n=6)	4.00
All stakeholders, who are invited, attend mediation sessions. (n=5)	4.00
All stakeholders at mediation sessions are prepared. (n=5)	4.60
All stakeholders at mediation sessions work toward reaching an agreement. (n=5)	4.80
All stakeholders get a voice at mediation sessions. (n=5)	5.00
Parents, who are invited, attend mediation sessions. (n=6)	4.75
Parents at mediation sessions work toward reaching agreement. (n=6)	4.50
Parents at mediation session are engaged in the process. (n=6)	5.00
Parents get a voice during mediation session. (n=6)	5.00
Age appropriate children are invited to attend mediation. (n=6)	4.25

As shown in the table, the average response for most items ranged between somewhat agree and strongly agree. One notable exception was respondents indicated less agreement with “The implementation of the mediation program was a success.” All survey participants strongly agreed to the following questions: “All stakeholders get a voice at mediation sessions,” “Parents get a voice during mediation sessions,” and “Parents at mediation session are engaged in the process.”

Participants were also asked several open ended questions:

- What are the barriers to utilizing mediation for parents?
- What are the barriers to utilizing mediation for stakeholders?
- In moving forward with the mediation program, what are some ways in which the program could be improved?

Utilization Barriers: Parents

No barriers were identified for parents from those responding to the survey. It was noted that caseworkers provide transportation when necessary. In addition, one respondent said that the mediation process is thoroughly explained to parents, so they understand what is going to happen.

Utilization Barriers: Stakeholders

Barriers that were identified for stakeholders included: court buy-in, increase amount of time spent in mediation, and lack of defense participation in the program. One respondent felt that even though there was a perception that mediation can take a good amount of time upfront, it results in more engaged parents and this could increase the likelihood of faster resolution. Some responses indicated there is some confusion about the process of referring to mediation and that attorneys may not want their clients to participate in the event they “admit” to something during the process.

PROCESS EVALUATION RESULTS

There were also several respondents who did not feel there were any barriers that stakeholders experience. In fact, those respondents felt that the mediator does a good job of accommodating stakeholders' needs and is flexible. There were additional positive comments regarding the mediator.

“EFFORTS TO KEEP MEDIATION AT THE ‘TOP OF THE MIND’ WHEN ENCOUNTERING A CASE IN DISPUTE, HAVE NOT BEEN ENTIRELY SUCCESSFUL.”

Program Improvement

Areas for improvement broadly included: absence of referrals for mediations either from the court or child welfare agency, lack of participation from defense attorneys, streamlined process, and lack of training for attorneys. One participant also said that more visible court support of the program would be useful. Judicial leadership can be a critical component to a successful juvenile dependency mediation program.

A participant indicated that training for attorneys and caseworkers about mediation and its purposes would greatly benefit the program. Mediation advocacy trainings should be explored to assist those new to mediation to understand the process and the added benefits to dependency cases.

Workload

Survey participants were asked how mediation affected their workload. The answers are reported in Table 3. Generally speaking respondents did not feel that mediation adds to their workload. One person who responded “Other” stated “It has not affected my workload at this time, but I anticipate that it could reduce my workload in the long run.” Other responses also included: “Does not affect my personal workload” and “...my answer does not appear relevant here.” This is a positive finding because if stakeholders view mediation as a means to reduce workload, there will be increasing buy-in for the program and therefore an increased number of cases that will be referred.

Mediation reduces my workload (n=1)	14.3%
Mediation requires the same amount of time as going to court (n=1)	14.3%
Mediation adds to my workload (n=1)	14.3%
Other (n=4)	57.1%

Mediation Satisfaction (Parents and Stakeholders)

WHAT DID YOU FIND MOST HELPFUL ABOUT MEDIATION?

- *A chance to talk without a judge or attorney*
- *The mediator*
- *Being able to open up*
- *Being part of the solution*
- *Communication*
- *Forum to allow parents to be heard*
- *Respectful discussion and no negativity*
- *Solutions for reunification are planned*
- *We were all able to sit down and talk*

Satisfaction surveys are distributed after a mediation session to stakeholders and parents who just participated. These surveys were provided to researchers at NCJFCJ to examine trends and report how stakeholders and parents perceive the program. A total of 28 surveys, from four of the five mediation sessions, were sent to researchers (15 from stakeholders and 13 from parents or other family members). The fifth mediation

occurred after data had been analyzed.

All the mediation sessions that have occurred in the 5th Judicial District have resulted in either all or partial agreements. This is a positive accomplishment for the program. Many of the stakeholders who filled out the survey felt that the agreement was comparable to one that might be reached in court.

Parents had positive experiences with mediation among those who completed the satisfaction surveys. When asked “Did the mediator explain the process clearly so you knew what to expect,” all respondents either strongly agreed (72.7%) or agreed (27.3%). When asked “Did you have a chance to voice your opinion,” all respondents either strongly agreed (76.9%) or agreed (23.1%). Sixty-one percent of parents strongly agreed and 38% agreed they felt listened to. One hundred percent of parents either strongly agreed or agreed to the statements “Was your mediation session conducted fairly” and “Were you able to be part of finding answers to problems discussed.” Only one parent responded negatively regarding the statement “Were you treated with respect” and the other 92% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed.

WHAT DID YOU FIND LEAST HELPFUL ABOUT MEDIATION?

- *I felt uncomfortable and nervous*
- *Mom did not always listen*
- *Needed more information when to speak up*
- *Not binding to Judge*
- *Verbal sparing*
- *Uncompromising*

PROCESS EVALUATION RESULTS

Like parents, stakeholders also had generally positive experiences with mediation according to those who completed the satisfaction surveys. When asked “did your client have a chance to voice their opinion,” 100% of respondents answered strongly agree (93.3%) or agree (6.7%). When asked “was your client really listened to,” 100% of respondents answered strongly agree (80%) or agree (20%). All stakeholders answered strongly agree to the question “were you treated with respect.” When asked “was your mediation session conducted fairly,” 100% of respondents answered strongly agree (93.3%) or agree (6.7%).

“I LIKE REMOVING THE WHOLE SYSTEM FROM THE CASE. YOU STEP INTO A COURTROOM AND...PEOPLE GET CONFRONTATIONAL. IN MEDIATION, YOU LOOK AT A PERSON FACE-TO-FACE AND IT’S NOT DICTATED BY THE PROTOCOLS OF COURT.”

DISCUSSION

The results of this process evaluation demonstrate that the juvenile dependency mediation program in the 5th Judicial District of Nevada has had a fairly successful start. From the online survey and satisfaction surveys, there is a general perception from both parents and stakeholders that they found mediation to be a very helpful tool in moving their case forward.

Parents who participated in the satisfaction survey given to them after their mediation, expressed they felt they were listened to and their opinions were respected. Parents also felt that they were made part of the decision process. These are all positive findings because parental engagement during the life of a dependency case can be problematic. If there is a way to keep parents engaged in the process and feel they have a forum to speak, this can improve the likelihood of reunification.

Stakeholders who participated in the online and satisfaction surveys and interviews also had similar feelings toward mediation as parents did. Overall, the majority of stakeholders found mediation to be an effective tool in increasing parental engagement and providing an alternative to litigation. An issue that was brought up several times as a challenge with the program start-up was a lack of participation from defense attorneys. Since the initial buy-in was low from defense attorneys, this may need to be addressed for the program to be successful moving forward. This can be addressed in multiple ways by either increasing efforts to gain buy-in from attorneys or exploring models where no parties have attorneys (not having an attorney will mean that extra care should be given to ensuring that parents are not coerced into decisions).

In addition, stakeholder survey responses and interviews revealed high satisfaction with the current mediator and her skills in mediation. Respondents noted the mediator's ability to keep the discussion civil and on-track. Stakeholders noted that the mediator can recognize when parents begin to disengage and get them engaged again.

One limitation to this process evaluation that should be noted was low survey response. There were no defense/parent attorneys who responded to either the online survey or requests for phone interviews. The other limitation to this process evaluation was the fact that few mediation sessions had taken place at the time of the assessment. It may be early to draw many conclusions about the program as it still needs to evaluate and make adjustments to function in its capacity to meet yearly goals and objectives.

CONCLUSION

These are all positive signs for a successful mediation program. Court Improvement Program (CIP) directors and coordinators are encouraged to continue incorporating Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) into their strategic plans. Continued support, evaluation and guidance for on-going and beginning mediation programs would be advantageous. It is also important for the administrators of the mediation program to incorporate CQI techniques and strategies to always improve their programs to ensure the best possible results for children and families. This is done by 1) utilizing the data collected from such programs to inform the needs of the program, 2) continuously monitor and measure effectiveness, and 3) provide feedback to the stakeholders involved with the program. For example, dependency mediation programs should track and monitor the progress of individual cases before and after mediation. The long-term outcomes (e.g. time to permanency, re-entry rates, reunification rates, etc.) of mediated cases could be compared to cases that did not get referred to mediation to explore the differences. Yearly reports could be generated for dissemination to stakeholders that could help them identify places for improvement. Continuous quality improvement includes making data-driven decisions to improve the functioning of a program to ultimately improve outcomes for children and families.

CONCLUSION

Although the dependency mediation program is still new, there were positive perceptions among those who participated in the online and in-person survey. It is also important to understand the benefits of a juvenile dependency mediation program and to continue to monitor outcomes of this current program in the 5th judicial district. Benefits that can be seen from an effective mediation program can include: time savings, parental engagement, focus on family strengths, non-adversarial environment, an alternative to lengthy litigation, and improved outcomes for children and families.

The key findings from the process evaluation were that parental engagement in the program has been productive and positive. Stakeholders and parents generally have positive experiences when in mediation. Parents felt they had a forum to speak and respected during the mediation. Program start-up was generally successful except for a lack of participation from defense attorneys.


General recommendations to the program include exploring additional training opportunities for stakeholders involved in mediation and those who might be new to it. This may help increase buy-in and understanding how mediation is beneficial. Judicial leadership is also needed for this program to be successful. Exploring the use of mediation at different stages of dependency case progression might increase the number of cases referred to mediation. In addition, referring cases that are in other phases of the dependency case progression might change the trajectory of a case. For instance, mediation could take a case that is non-resolvable or heading towards termination of parental rights and completely turn it around. It could also engage parents who are not complying with their case plan to renew their commitment and get back on-track. Currently, mediations are only held at the initial phases of the case, but mediation can be used at all stages, including termination of parental rights.

"I THINK MEDIATION SHOULD BE USED AT ALL STAGES OF THE CASE. I HAD A FAMILY WHO WAS HEADED TO TERMINATING THEIR PARENTAL RIGHTS AND NOW REUNIFICATION IS THE GOAL!"

As with all research and evaluation, continued monitoring and data collection are needed to ensure the program is functioning in the capacity as intended. A well-structured outcome evaluation can dig deeper into the long term effects of mediation on the outcomes for children and families. As more mediation sessions are scheduled in the 5th judicial district, mediation administrators and other stakeholders should consider monitoring the outcomes of those families that have participated. The

CONCLUSION

mediation program is already seeing parental engagement, among those parents who have participated and positive feelings towards mediation. Findings from interviews and online survey responses show a strong commitment to the program's success.



Second Judicial
District
Mediation
Program
Quarterly and
Final Reports

NEVADA COURT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

QUARTERLY PROGRAM REPORT

PROGRAM NAME: 2nd Judicial District Dependency Mediation Program Year 2

Contract # 14-417

Reporting for:

- January - March (due April 30th)
- April - June (due July 30th)
- July – September (due October 30th)
- October - December (due January 30th)

As outlined in the proposal logic model, describe the project activities during the quarter. For example: the project plan, design and pilot; impact analysis; study of project impact; project improvement and adjustment.

During this reporting period (April 1, 2014 – June 30, 2014), the Dependency Mediation Project in the 2nd Judicial District continued to focus on refining mediation practice, expanding opportunities for meaningful participation and empowering participants to reach understandings that improve communication and address conflict in ways that encourage ongoing relationships.

While there has always been a commitment that dependency mediation should be as inclusive as possible, this quarter saw the conversation shift from simply identifying *who* should be at the table to exploring specific strategies for encouraging full and meaningful participation. One particular mediation case in 2013 was a catalyst for encouraging us to think about how we bring people to the table. The case involved a child who had not seen her father in several years. Father resides in Mexico and the permanency plan was reunification of the child with her father. Along with the case worker and District Attorney, the child was present for mediation. Because the plan was for her to reunify with Father in Mexico, it was important she have a forum to be heard. Father was present by phone. As the mediator later noted, though a satisfactory outcome was reached in this case, it would have been a far richer and more positive experience for child and father if he were “present” through the use of videoconferencing or similar technology. The mediator felt the child would have felt more at ease about the proposed plan had she been able to actually see her father and have the opportunity to begin the transition process at mediation.

With this in mind, the Court’s IT Department was contacted and staff suggested “Go to Meeting” as a video conference option. When another case involving an out of country placement for a child presented as the central case issue, we were able to bring the prospective adoptive parents who reside in Germany literally “into the room” and fully integrate them into the mediation process. The following mediator notes confirm the success of this approach: “The conferencing was coordinated in advance with Court IT and the prospective adoptive parents. With the exception of an initial audio issue, it went very smoothly. It was wonderful to use video rather than having the parents on the speaker phone, which is usually what we do. It felt as if the parties were in the room with us. Thinking back to other cases I have mediated, I believe that using video conference would have greatly improved the mediation experience. It is very worthwhile to explore continuing to use this technology.” This innovation and practice change for Dependency Mediation in the 2nd

Judicial District touches on key processes, outputs, outcomes and impacts in the project logic model; specifically: improving efficiency and implementing changes for more effective operation of Dependency Mediation as well as improving parent/participant engagement.

Also this quarter we continued to refine the process for coordinating participation by incarcerated parents. This included arrangements for parents incarcerated at Jean Conservation Camp, Carlin Conservation Camp, Southern Desert Correctional Center, Warm Springs and Stewart Conservation Camp.

Finally, one of the highlights this quarter was a mediation involving 14 participants, an Interpreter and Mediator. Though no agreement was reached, the mediator saw progress in that many issues were placed on the table and parties left with a greater understanding and awareness of the challenges in the case and various permanency options. Present at the mediation: 4 Caseworkers, 1 District Attorney representing Social Services, 2 sets of adoptive parents, Attorney for one set of adoptive parents, Father and his Attorney, Mother who participated by phone from prison, Mother's Attorney, an Interpreter, and the Mediator. The mediation process in this and many other cases is particularly appropriate where there is a need to preserve a relationship between the parties. In this instance, one set of prospective adoptive parents was able to share a video with Father of the child placed with them – a child whose special needs can only be explained by seeing the child firsthand. Watching the video was a turning point in the conversation, from resistance to working together for a solution. Success in this case was the ability of the disputing parties to begin that needed conversation about the permanency options that would best serve this child.

Describe the progress in terms of achieving measurable objectives of the grant award: What specific objective changes have occurred. Please provide data and process of collecting data.

The number of mediation case referrals increased in the second quarter to 44, up from 36 in the first quarter. As the number of referrals has increased, the number of available mediation spots remains at a premium. We continue to find mediation slots are quickly filled and then refilled with a new referral if a case settles prior to mediation. Growth brings its own challenges and we are continually exploring how to satisfy the broader demand for more mediation availability

Of the 44 case referrals this quarter, 10 cases settled prior to mediation and 4 cases could not mediate because one or both parents no showed. Of the 30 mediations held, full agreement was reached in 22 cases; partial agreement was reached in 1 case; and no agreement was reached in 7 cases. The agreement rate for this quarter is 77%- a figure that exceeds Project Goal 2 outlined in the grant proposal. That goal was that 75% of the mediations that take place will result in full or partial agreement.

We also continue to progress on the goal of increased information sharing among program partners (Goal 7). At a Project One meeting held June 6 at the Court, over 30 participants spanning both Juvenile Delinquency and Dependency systems gathered to chart case flow within these systems and identify strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities. Dependency mediation was quickly identified as a current strength within the Dependency system. It was also noted that Dependency Mediation is vulnerable given the challenge of long term funding. The fact that so many diverse interests were represented and so many diverse interests were supportive shows progress in spreading involvement and ownership of Dependency Mediation across organizations and institutions. This suggests the foundation is

in place for investing in Dependency Mediation in the 2nd Judicial District long term and the next step will be to develop a sustainability plan with specific options and timelines attached.

Describe any problems, delays or adverse conditions you have experienced in achieving the stated objectives. Include a statement of action taken, or contemplated and any assistance needed to resolve the situation.

One of the project activities was to review data needs and collect and maintain data for ongoing evaluation. This would assist in determining the efficiency, effectiveness and replicability of juvenile dependency mediation. One of the ongoing research questions is does dependency mediation save time and money?

The establishment of a baseline to measure time-savings for the court and system players has proven to be particularly challenging. The NCJFCJ studies of the 2nd Judicial District Court's Dependency Mediation Program (June, 2013 and December, 2013) focused primarily on process, satisfaction with current mediation practice, outcomes and mediator evaluation. It would be helpful to have the formal research experience and resources of the Council to more rigorously address the cost benefits of dependency mediation. Currently we have very limited staff resources to undertake this effort. And in the end, it may be that there is little evidence that dependency mediation saves the court significant time and money. The primary benefit may be providing better solutions and creating more satisfaction with the process by the parties.

Describe any activities scheduled for the next reporting period.

Over the next reporting period, we will continue to focus on a variety of program improvements as we develop and build consensus on a long term sustainability plan. An immediate goal is to schedule a meeting in August with Judge Schumacher, Judge Walker and Master Lu to obtain feedback on the program and develop a series of action steps to address any concerns from the Bench. During this time of transition in Family Court, it is important to communicate about ways in which the program can be improved or adjusted to better serve the needs of the court.

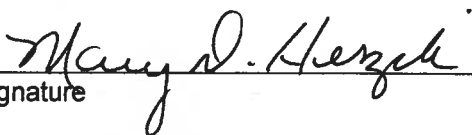
Mary D. Herzik, MA

Print Name

Family Services Manager

Title

Signature



Date

7/30/14

NEVADA COURT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

FINAL PROGRAM REPORT

PROGRAM NAME: Juvenile Dependency Mediation Program

Second Judicial District Court

Contract # 14-417

Reporting for:

- January - March (due April 30th)
- April - June (due July 30th)
- July – September (due October 30th)
- October - December (due January 30th)

As outlined in the proposal logic model, describe the project activities during the quarter. For example: the project plan, design and pilot; impact analysis; study of project impact; project improvement and adjustment.

During the final reporting period for this grant (July 1, 2014 – October 31, 2014), the Juvenile Dependency Mediation Program in the 2nd Judicial District continued to focus on quality improvement efforts and program sustainability – two key project activities which ultimately impact the likelihood of long term integration of dependency mediation into the court’s child dependency system.

In addition to quality improvement and program sustainability, finding an effective path to parental involvement has been a key activity throughout the project period. These efforts have focused on identifying barriers to parent participation and strategies for parent empowerment. It is important to recognize the system places parents at a disadvantage because of the preference given to the agency and its resources, the influence of authorities and the experience of the professional players. Mediation provides an opportunity to reset that balance. In the mediation setting, parents may feel more open to contributing valuable case information while the agency has an opportunity to inform parents of what is happening and why. In the end it can lead to improved cooperation between the parents and professionals and increased parent engagement, particularly on the part of fathers. A key finding from NCJFCJ’s outcome evaluation of the 2nd JD’s dependency mediation program in December 2013 found mediation significantly increased father’s presence at hearings compared to fathers who did not participate in mediation. As the report goes on to note, “Referring fathers to mediation may be a useful way to engage them in the juvenile dependency process” (pg. 9). Indeed, a father who participated in mediation during this reporting period followed up with a note to the mediator afterwards saying, “Thank you so much for everyone’s help and understanding in mediation. I feel a great relief that we came to an agreement, and now I can move forward with being reunited with my girls.”

One of the key questions in dependency mediation is how success should be defined and measured. While courts want to ensure an efficient and safe transition to permanency as soon as possible, allowing families to have a voice in the process may lead to both higher parent satisfaction and improved case outcomes. One of the most striking findings from the NCJFCJ

report titled *Outcome Evaluation of Mediation in Washoe County, Nevada* is that mediated cases were more likely to result in family reunification when compared to non-mediated cases. Add to this, current research which reflects high levels of parent satisfaction with mediation, more nuanced agreements and improved permanency outcomes. Moreover, mediation seems to produce positive results no matter what stage of the process it is applied to.

Mediators have suggested success should not be measured simply in terms of agreements reached, but in terms of the impact on family and children. Jeanette Belz, a mediator in the 2nd JD observed, "I have had two contested TPR's recently without an agreement at mediation. The parent was just not ready to make a decision although a lot of great information was shared. I hope that we might consider another outcome option that would capture this benefit. While it's hard to measure, progress is definitely made in cases where the agreement box isn't checked."

Another key project activity has been tracking and monitoring project statistics. Over the one year project period, juvenile dependency mediation in the 2nd Judicial District has expanded significantly. From November 1, 2013 to October 31, 2014, 106 mediations were held. This exceeds the target goal of mediating 90 cases over the project period. Agreements were reached in 77 cases (73%). This is only slightly under the 75% agreement rate set as an objective in the project proposal.

In the final four months of the project (July 1, 2014 – October 31, 2014), 39 mediations were held. Agreements were reached in 29 cases (74.3%). This puts us right at the target goal of 75% agreement.

The final project activity which has gained momentum over the project period has been efforts to ensure program sustainability. At the beginning of October, 2014, a grant proposal to continue dependency mediation in the 2nd Judicial District was submitted to CIP. In addition, a grant was submitted to the Lee Del Grande Foundation to expand dependency mediation while at the same time funding from program partners is being sought – all part of a sustainability plan to create stable funding and support for the Juvenile Dependency Mediation Program. By spreading involvement and ownership across organizations and institutions, we will be ensuring mediation continues to be an option for resolving disputes in child protection matters in the 2nd Judicial District.

Describe evaluations conducted and the results, including all relevant statistics concerning planned outcomes and impact, in the logic model.

1) Outcomes:

In 2012, NCJFJC was contracted by the Nevada Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) to assess dependency mediation in the 2nd Judicial District. The assessment included a process evaluation, a satisfaction evaluation and an outcome evaluation. The initial outcome evaluation focused only on termination of parental rights (TPR) cases. A follow up evaluation was conducted by NCJFJC in 2013 with researchers expanding their analysis to examine the effectiveness of mediation earlier in the case. As noted in the report summary, "This outcome evaluation demonstrated that many of the variables of interest trended in a positive direction, but did lack statistical significance. The study was limited in sample size and a larger sample size may have yielded more significant findings. A very positive finding from this outcome

evaluation was that mediated cases result in more reunifications compared to non-mediated cases and that fathers were more engaged in the process. The Washoe County Mediation Program has demonstrated that cases referred to mediation can result in more reunified families.” (Executive Summary, December 2013).

These results add to the body of research that supports high levels of parent satisfaction with mediation. Research indicates and parent’s counsel reports that parents do feel empowered and better listened to with these processes. As one parent participant noted, “Mediation helped us talk out the problems.” Another said, “They let you speak before everybody else.” By and large, the goal of empowerment seems to be being met. Allowing families and parents to have an effective voice in the process may, in fact, be the most important *long term* goal of dependency mediation.

Making sure that all participants can participate in a safe, constructive and inclusive manner was one of the “process” issues we confronted over the project period. Though it wasn’t specifically mentioned as a project goal, we did successfully develop a process for ensuring incarcerated parents’ participation by phone in mediation. The process that went into effect May 1, 2014 provides the Family Services Division will draft an *Order for Telephonic Appearance* and submit to the referring Department for signature and processing. Family Services then arranges directly with the correctional institute for the incarcerated parties’ participation in the mediation session. As a result, 15 incarcerated parents were able to participate in dependency mediations scheduled over the project period.

Finally, one of the challenges we continue to address is parent no shows. From November 1, 2013 – October 31, 2014 there have been an average of 2 no shows per month. On a positive note, for the last month of the reporting period parents and their counsel were present for all 10 mediations that were held.

2) Impact:

Reflecting on the Dependency Mediation Program in the 2nd Judicial District, Judge Egan Walker observes:

“In cases where the dependency process results in termination of parental rights, mediation is likely one of the few humane processes which we can offer parents. In the great majority of cases which remain, mediation is reaping benefits through earlier participation of parents and the tantalizing possibility that mediation will be a significant tool with which to accelerate the safe and effective reunification of families. The Dependency Mediation Program is a great example of how a modest dollars of investment early can reap untold rewards in positive outcomes later.”

Judicial support for dependency mediation, indeed, is a key factor impacting long term program success. While all dependency mediation programs struggle with funding and sustainability, the key to successful programs is the degree of support from courts, agencies and professionals. In the 2nd Judicial District we have developed a strong partnership made up of judicial officers, stakeholders, mediators and program staff who share a fundamental goal of empowering parents and families. Allowing parents to have a voice in child welfare decision-making can significantly impact case outcomes as reflected in the mediator notes below (from Mediator Margaret Crowley):

We recently had a mediation between mother, father and prospective adoptive parents about a potential open adoption agreement. This is standard subject matter for dependency mediation. In this case, the mother had been asking for months to meet with the prospective parents but it

hadn't happened. This mediation was so important for her that mother came to it even though she was in labor. She was able to focus enough to have a good conversation with the prospective parents, receive some pictures and hear about how her children were doing. At the end, she expressed that the meeting gave her peace of mind (everyone agreed she was not in an appropriate state to sign a mediated agreement, but the parties ironed out many details and committed to further conversation). She left the mediation to go directly to the hospital. At one point, she wasn't sure she had a ride and the prospective adoptive parents offered her one. Although that didn't happen, this mediation illustrates a few key points: (1) parents often recognize that mediation offers them a vital opportunity that they otherwise would not have in the court process; and (2) parties sometimes build relationships quickly in mediation and become comfortable in an otherwise awkward situation.

Explain your progress in terms of achieving the project's stated measurable objectives, in the logic model.

Progress on the objectives outlined in the logic model are reflected below:

1. Mediate at least 90 cases during the project period. This goal was met. From November 1, 2013 – October 31, 2014 106 cases were mediated.
2. 75% of the mediators will result in full or partial agreement. Agreements were reached in 77 out of 106 cases (73%).
3. Decrease the number of parent no shows to 5% or less of all dependency mediations held. We did not meet this goal and continue to have challenges around parent no shows. Strategies for ensuring parent's attendance is an ongoing conversation with parent's counsel. We have, however, developed a process for ensuring incarcerated parents can participate in mediation by phone so that is a positive step in providing an opportunity for meaningful participation by a parent who cannot be present in person. Similarly we have used video technology on at least two occasions when a participant has been unable to be present in person. In one case prospective adoptive parents participated in the mediation session from Germany.
4. Impact of mediation on permanency outcomes (note this relates to goals 4 and 5 on the Logic Model). A case file review of 27 mediated cases compared to 25 cases that had not been mediated by researchers at NCJFCJ found that mediated cases were more likely to result in reunification. This is a significant research finding that adds to the body of research on dependency mediation.
5. Improved perceptions of mediation among stakeholders. Over the project period, stakeholder support has increased to the point that requests for mediation exceed the number of slots available. At this point we are considering routinely doing a "second set" so if a case settles prior to mediation, another case is already positioned for mediation.
6. Hold six program partner meetings over the project period with 80% attendance. Instead of program partner meetings, we used Model Court meetings to address program processes and gather input.
7. Develop a system for tracking time-savings for the court and system players in mediated cases. This continues to be a challenge given limited resources of the IT Department

and program administrative staff. Though we don't currently have a systematic way of tracking these specific system impacts, we do have consensus among judicial officers and court staff that dependency mediation helps move cases forward. As Master Cynthia Lu notes, "By mediating agreements prior to the settlement conference, the program has greatly assisted in reducing congested court dockets."

Mary D. Herzik, MA

Family Services Manager

Print Name

Title

Signature

Date



Child and
Family Services
Reviews,
Quick
Reference
Items List

Child and Family Services Reviews Quick Reference Items List

OUTCOMES

Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.

Item 1: Were the agency's responses to all **accepted child maltreatment reports initiated**, and **face-to-face contact** with the child(ren) made, within time frames established by agency policies or state statutes?

Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.

Item 2: Did the agency make concerted efforts to provide services to the family to **prevent** children's **entry into foster care or re-entry** after reunification?

Item 3: Did the agency make concerted efforts to **assess and address the risk and safety** concerns relating to the child(ren) in their own homes or while in foster care?

Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

Item 4: Is the child in foster care in a **stable placement** and were any changes in the child's placement in the best interests of the child and consistent with achieving the child's permanency goal(s)?

Item 5: Did the agency establish **appropriate permanency goals** for the child in a **timely manner**?

Item 6: Did the agency make concerted efforts to **achieve reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned permanent living arrangement** for the child?

Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.

Item 7: Did the agency make concerted efforts to ensure that **siblings in foster care are placed together** unless separation was necessary to meet the needs of one of the siblings?

Item 8: Did the agency make concerted efforts to ensure that **visitation between a child in foster care and his or her mother, father, and siblings** was of sufficient frequency and quality to promote continuity in the child's relationships with these close family members?

Item 9: Did the agency make concerted efforts to **preserve the child's connections** to his or her neighborhood, community, faith, extended family, Tribe, school, and friends?

Item 10: Did the agency make concerted efforts to **place the child with relatives** when appropriate?

Item 11: Did the agency make concerted efforts to promote, support, and/or maintain **positive relationships between the child in foster care and his or her mother and father** or other primary caregivers from whom the child had been removed through activities other than just arranging for visitation?

Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.

Item 12: Did the agency make concerted efforts to **assess the needs** of and **provide services** to **children, parents, and foster parents** to identify the services necessary to achieve case goals and adequately address the issues relevant to the agency's involvement with the family?

Item 13: Did the agency make concerted efforts to involve the **parents and children** (if developmentally appropriate) **in the case planning** process on an ongoing basis?

Item 14: Were the **frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and child(ren)** sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child(ren) and promote achievement of case goals?

Item 15: Were the **frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the mothers and fathers** of the child(ren) sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child(ren) and promote achievement of case goals?

Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.

Item 16: Did the agency make concerted efforts to assess **children's educational needs**, and appropriately address identified needs in case planning and case management activities?

Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

Item 17: Did the agency address the **physical health needs** of children, including dental health needs?

Item 18: Did the agency address the **mental/behavioral health needs** of children?

SYSTEMIC FACTORS

Statewide Information System

Item 19: How well is the **statewide information system** functioning statewide to ensure that, at a minimum, the state can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care?

Case Review System

Item 20: How well is the case review system functioning statewide to ensure that each child has a **written case plan** that is developed jointly with the child's parent(s) and includes the required provisions?

Item 21: How well is the case review system functioning statewide to ensure that a **periodic review** for each child occurs no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review?

Item 22: How well is the case review system functioning statewide to ensure that, for each child, a **permanency hearing** in a qualified court or administrative body occurs no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter?

Item 23: How well is the case review system functioning to ensure that the filing of **termination of parental rights (TPR)** proceedings occurs in accordance with required provisions?

Item 24: How well is the case review system functioning to ensure that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care are **notified of, and have a right to be heard** in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child?

Quality Assurance System

Item 25: How well is the **quality assurance system** functioning statewide to ensure that it is (1) operating in the jurisdictions where the services included in the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) are provided, (2) has standards to evaluate the quality of services (including standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect their health and safety), (3) identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, (4) provides relevant reports, and (5) evaluates implemented program improvement measures?

Staff and Provider Training

Item 26: How well is the staff and provider training system functioning statewide to ensure that **initial training** is provided to all staff who deliver services pursuant to the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) that includes the basic skills and knowledge required for their positions?

- Item 27: How well is the staff and provider training system functioning statewide to ensure that **ongoing training** is provided for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP?
- Item 28: How well is the staff and provider training system functioning to ensure that **training** is occurring statewide for current or prospective **foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff** of state licensed or approved facilities (that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-E) that addresses the skills and knowledge needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children?

Service Array and Resource Development

- Item 29: How well is the service array and resource development system functioning to ensure that the following array of services is **accessible** in all political jurisdictions covered by the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP)?
1. Services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs;
 2. Services that address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment;
 3. Services that enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable; and
 4. Services that help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency.
- Item 30: How well is the service array and resource development system functioning statewide to ensure that the services in item 29 can be **individualized** to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency?

Agency Responsiveness to the Community

- Item 31: How well is the agency responsiveness to the community system functioning statewide to ensure that, in implementing the provisions of the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) and developing related Annual Progress and Services Reports (APSRs), the state engages in **ongoing consultation** with Tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies and includes the major concerns of these representatives in the goals, objectives, and annual updates of the CFSP?
- Item 32: How well is the agency responsiveness to the community system functioning statewide to ensure that the state's services under the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) are **coordinated with services or benefits of other federal or federally assisted programs** serving the same population?

Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

- Item 33: How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system functioning statewide to ensure that **state standards** are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-B or IV-E funds?
- Item 34: How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system functioning statewide to ensure that the state complies with federal requirements for **criminal background clearances** as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements, and has in place a case planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children?
- Item 35: How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system functioning to ensure that the process for ensuring the **diligent recruitment** of potential foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the state for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed is occurring statewide?
- Item 36: How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system functioning to ensure that the process for ensuring the effective use of **cross-jurisdictional resources** to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children is occurring statewide?



Continual
Quality
Improvement
Implementation
Guide



CONTINUAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

FY 2013

This is a step-by-step guide to integrate the concepts of continual quality improvement into the daily functioning of the Court Improvement Project.

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IMPLEMENTING CQI INTO CIP PRACTICE

Understanding and Implementing Continual Quality Improvement (CQI)

Continual quality improvement has been defined as “the complete process of identifying, describing, and analyzing strengths and problems and then testing, implementing, learning from, and revising solutions.” In an age of accountability, it is important for programs to be able to describe *how* they are functioning, to identify the strengths and weaknesses associated with program implementation and functioning, and to make efforts to improve their process to ensure that the program is meeting its goals. Only then can programs and practices be evaluated to determine if they are positively improving outcomes for children and families involved in the system. For the CQI process to be effective, it needs to include strong leadership, buy-in from systems stakeholders, a culture that is receptive to continual learning and change, and a concrete plan for how CQI can be woven into existing frameworks to ensure it is not only understood, but becomes a foundational part of practice.

The *Continual Quality Improvement (CQI) Implementation Guide* is meant to serve as a reference for integrating the concepts of continual quality improvement into Court Improvement Program practice. This *Guide* identifies concrete steps and recommendations to ensure the CQI principles are part of the CIP process.



IMPLEMENTING CQI INTO CIP PRACTICE

Step 1: Train CIP Staff on CQI

As noted above, integrating CQI into practice requires strong leadership, buy-in from systems stakeholders, and a culture that is receptive to continual learning and change. As part of this, it will be important to have staff that understand the importance of CQI and have the time and dedication to integrate it into daily practice. It will be up to the CIP to determine what this may look like, but it is recommended that as many members of the staff as necessary are trained on CQI. Staff training on CQI could include topics such as the basics of evaluations, different perspectives on CQI (e.g., quality assurance or quality improvement work), or strategies on how to develop training and evaluation tools. In addition to training of staff, the CIP may also want to ensure that they have identified a neutral third party (who does not work for the CIP or child abuse and neglect court system) who is an expert in CQI, to advise on projects and make recommendations for enhancing CQI efforts.

The CQI-trained staff are important as they will be tasked with identifying the current CQI needs of the CIP; identifying the programs and practices that are a priority for evaluation; identifying data sources available; helping facilitate development of data collection tools; reviewing applications from a CQI focus; and working with sites to ensure reporting requirements are met and appropriately useful to continually improve the program. Training for the staff should occur periodically to continually improve knowledge and understanding of the CQI process, as well as to better understand recent developments, findings and methodologies that may affect systems change efforts.

IMPLEMENTING CQI INTO CIP PRACTICE

Step 2: Review the Current Strategic Plan with a CQI Lens

While it would be optimal to begin implementing CQI into a new program or practice, the reality is that the process often involves retrofitting CQI to something that already exists. The Court Improvement Programs already have some of the foundation pieces that would facilitate the CQI process. For example, all CIPs have a strategic plan that includes the programs, trainings, and practices that have been implemented or are in the process of being implemented in the hopes of creating systems change. A review of the strategic plan by the CQI-trained staff is a good first step in the process.

The goals of the current strategic plan should be reviewed to identify areas of interest or in need of evaluation. It is important to consider that while CQI of all components is the goal, there will be many projects, and it will be important to identify programs/activities to begin this process. Once these goals have been identified, they must be conceptualized into measurable components. For example, if one of the goals is increased timeliness of case processing, what factors could be examined to identify whether this has been achieved? More specifically, what constitutes timeliness? Before proceeding with an evaluation, these questions must be answered clearly. Some questions to think about for the activities identified in the strategic plan include:

- Is the target improvement clearly defined? Is it measurable?
- Is there an identified data source? If not, how will (can) data be collected?
- How often will progress be tracked?
- How/when will feedback be given to the program?
- When will the program make adjustments to practice?
- When will the re-evaluation of the program begin?

Contracting with an expert who knows how to do research or program evaluation can be helpful in this step, as they will be able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current plan, help transition goals into something measurable, and conceptualize plans for evaluation.

IMPLEMENTING CQI INTO CIP PRACTICE

Step 3: Identify Ways to Collect (or Find Existing) Data

After identifying the programs, practices, and activities that need to evaluate, it will be important to identify data sources. Identification of ways to obtain data that allows for the measurement of goals is vital in CQI'ing a process. This should include conversations with all systems stakeholders to determine the currently available data systems. The agency, for example, will have a data system in place, and may collect data on information that will be useful in assessing the current functioning of specific programs. Further, the agency reports the data to the Adoption and Foster Care Reporting System (AFCARS), which will have state level data (and larger jurisdiction data). Courts may also have their own case management systems that track specific variables of interest.

If data is not already available, it will be important to design a plan to collect data. This may include the collection of quantitative or qualitative data. Quantitative data involves collecting numerical information from various primary sources (e.g., court records or stakeholder surveys) or secondary sources (e.g., Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System, the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System, and the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information Systems).

Qualitative data does not focus on numbers, but rather on descriptive information. Qualitative data gives a richer, more detailed description of the situation and can often be collected through parent or stakeholder interviews; open-ended survey questions; and parent or stakeholder focus groups. This information can help determine the perception of stakeholders and users regarding how well the program is working and what needs to be adjusted.

In Nevada, identified sources of data include:

- Agency Data
 - Chapin Hall
- Adoption and Foster Care Reporting System (AFCARS)
- Court Management System

Data can also be collected through:

- Case file review
- Court observation
- Surveys
- Focus groups
- Interviews

Step 4: Create a Data Collection Plan & Tools

After projects have been identified that should be assessed and data sources have been identified, it will be important for the CQI-trained staff to create a plan for collection of data. The *outcomes* and *impacts* columns of the strategic plan will help to identify the ways the activities have been conceptualized. If the outcome identified includes words like increase or decrease, it will be important to collect baseline data (before the intervention) and follow-up data (after the intervention) to determine if there was change. If the outcome is related to acquiring a skill or learning or exhibiting a behavior, this may be measurable once, at the conclusion of the intervention. Resources, like the *Training and Evaluation Guide* can be used to better understand data collection methods and facilitate creation of data collection tools. Larger evaluation projects can be outsourced to evaluation experts.

Agency Data. Agency data includes case level information on the children and families served, including some timeliness data, such as those requested by the Children's Bureau. Agency data may be useful in collecting pre and post data on a project.

Case File Review. For data that are not available in agency (or court) dataset, case file review may be ideal. Case file review includes examining the legal and/or social files of the cases. This will include information on petitions, and each hearing type, including parties present, dates, services ordered, and case outcomes.

Court Observation. Court observation allows for observation of current court practice, which can be useful in assessing the breadth of conversation, parental engagement in the process, or other areas of court practice that may not be reflected in a file.

Surveys. Surveys are ideal for assessing perceptions of stakeholders. This can include attitudinal measures, as well as assessments of current practice, changes in practice, or questions related to how effectively a program has been implemented. Online surveys are cost-efficient and can reach a broad range of stakeholders.

Interviews. Interviews require asking specific questions of stakeholder or program participants, and can provide more in-depth information and additional context to any quantitative data collected.

IMPLEMENTING CQI INTO CIP PRACTICE

Focus Groups. Focus groups can be used to gather together a small group of persons to discuss their perceptions of practice or practice change.

IMPLEMENTING CQI INTO CIP PRACTICE

Step 5: Ensure Application Process Has CQI Focus

As part of CQI'ing the process, it will be important to ensure that all new requests for funding clearly articulate how they will measure their progress and make changes. This can be achieved through an application process that requires potential fundees to include a plan for assessing the program, identify measurable outcomes and data sources, and articulate how the program will use information to continually improve the process. The application process for CIP funding in Nevada was recently modified to include these provisions. The application (available [here](#) and as an appendix to this guide) asks participants, among other requirements, to create a logic model with measurable goals, an evaluation plan, and a sustainability plan. Fundees should be required to CQI themselves, in order to receive funding.

Logic Model:

Describe the link between the funding request and the requested *measurable* and *quantifiable* outcomes.

Evaluation Methodology:

All proposals must include an evaluation component. Describe the performance indicators for the project and/or the process you will use to evaluate *whether the program has met its goals* and its impact on the system.

Sustainability Plan:

Describe any other source of funding for the project and how the initiative will be sustained when CIP grant funding expires.

IMPLEMENTING CQI INTO CIP PRACTICE

Step 6: Review of the Funding Application by CQI-trained Staff

After potential fundees have completed the application, it should be reviewed by the CQI-trained staff with a CQI focus. Important questions to consider are:

- Does the proposal identify measurable goals?
- Does the proposal identify data sources?
- Is the evaluation plan feasible?
- What data will they collect? How does the data relate back to the program goals?
- How will they measure the fidelity of program implementation?
- What mechanisms are in place for continued improvements to the program?

The proposal can also be sent to the neutral CQI-expert to review the CQI components. This individual should examine the application for several aspects, such as feasibility (e.g., is the evaluation plan doable) accuracy (e.g., is the language in the application accurate), and measurability (e.g., are the identified measures and data collection procedures appropriate for examining the goal). The CQI-expert should identify strengths and weaknesses of the application, help identify potential data sources, and make recommendations for improving the application, including how to collect and report data.

IMPLEMENTING CQI INTO CIP PRACTICE

Step 7: Using Data Effectively in Reporting

As data collection is an integral part of the CQI process, it will be important to ensure that the data is being used in an efficient manner. Data will be collected by any CIP program fundees, the CQI-trained staff, and any organization that has been hired to evaluate programs and practices. Again, data can include qualitative and quantitative information about the programs. The data can be used for different purposes and should be reported in a way that is useful for the program and the CIP. Data reporting purposes include:

1. Identifying the strengths and weaknesses of a program. Both new and current programs can benefit from a process evaluation to examine how the program was implemented. This data can be used to identify both challenges to implementation and successful strategies that facilitated implementation of a program. Further, this is an essential first step necessary for documenting the program's development and identifying systems change needs.
2. Identifying the gaps between the expectations and performance. As with a process evaluation, it is important to determine how a program is performing, and whether it is meeting its goals. For example, a mediation program may have a goal of a 75% agreement rate and, but current rate is only 50% agreement. Data can be used not only to determine the current percentage of agreement, but may also be able to reflect why the program is not performing.
3. Examining the effects of the program on outcomes for children and families. After determining if the program was successfully implemented, and whether it is meeting its goals, data can be used to determine whether a program is successfully impacting outcomes for children and families involved in the system. For example, assuming a mediation program was fully implemented, and is meeting its goal of a 75% agreement rate, it will be important to determine if agreed mediations result in better outcomes for children and families, such as less time in foster care or increased reunification.

These data reports can be in multiple forms. Project fundees are required to submit quarterly reports to the CIP. These quarterly reports should report data collected during the reporting period, as well as a narrative of how the data is being used to inform practice. Other types of reporting may include reports from larger evaluations, and final reports. The CQI-trained staff can use these reports to work with project fundees to enhance their understanding of CQI and ensure they are using the information efficiently.

Step 8: Implement Change

After data has been identified and reported in a way that identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the program, the gaps between expectations and performance, and/or the outcomes of the program on children and families, it will be important to consider any needed changes to the program. Ideally, program staff should convene a committee that includes a variety of key stakeholders (e.g., judicial leadership, Child Protective Service staff, parent attorneys, child attorneys, and program staff). This committee should discuss the findings, including problem areas of the program, and brainstorm possible solutions. If a committee is not available, this can be done locally by the program administrative staff. After vetting the solutions and agreeing upon a course of action, the changes to the program should be introduced to all stakeholders. A timeline should be created for when these changes will be implemented and any additional resource needs (e.g., staff) should be identified. As soon as the changes are implemented to the program, the CQI process begins anew.

Step 9: Disseminate Findings

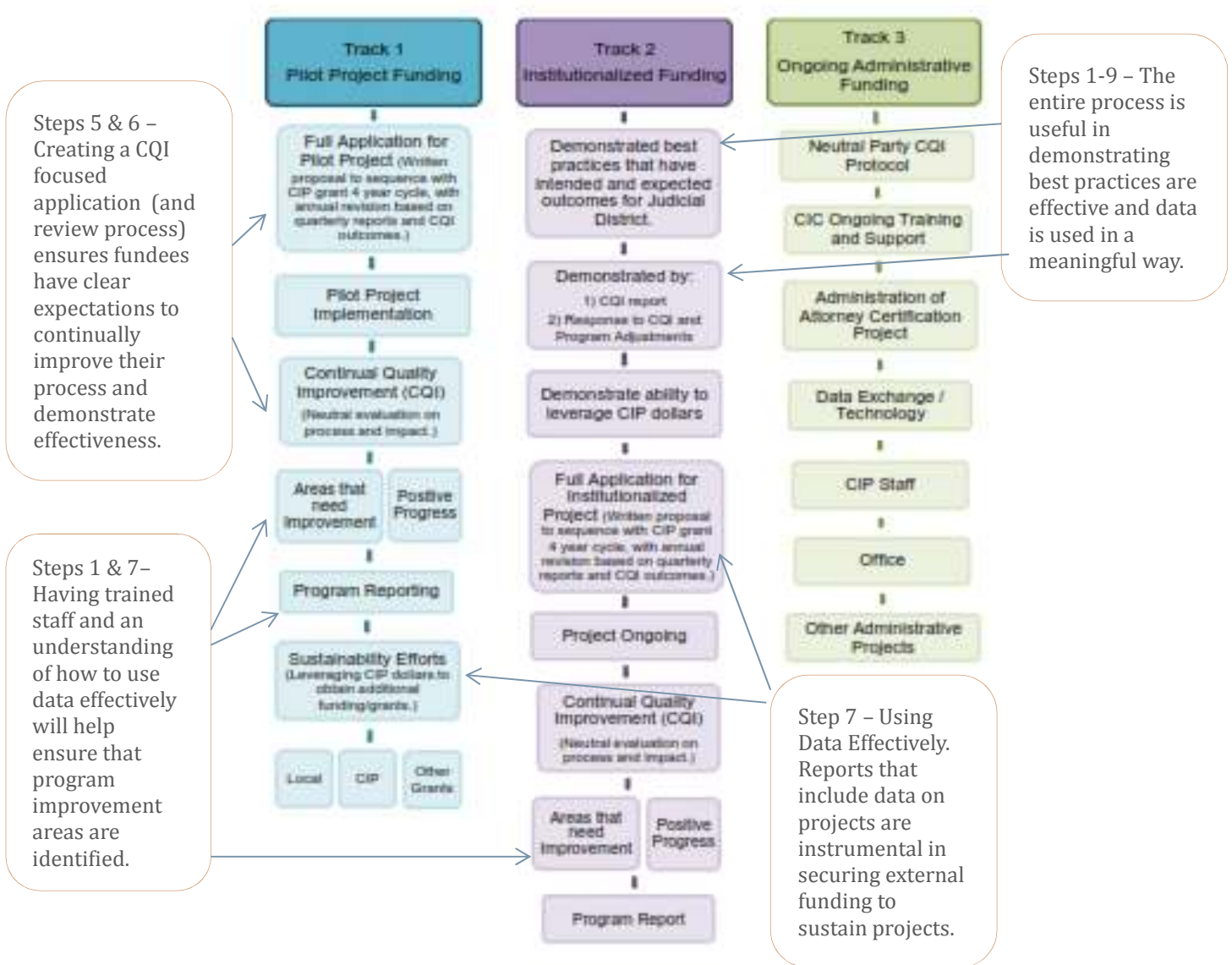
It will be important, as part of the larger CQI process, to disseminate findings from the CQI process. Data reports can be most effective if they are shared by multiple stakeholders so that others who wish to implement a similar program can learn from their challenges and successes. Data reports can also help to inform the larger stakeholder community about the effects of such programs, so that programs implemented on a local level may have national implications. Further, dissemination will allow programs to illustrate their positive outcomes to potential funders, which will be necessary if programs wish to achieve sustainability.

After reviewing the data reports and ensuring the accuracy, consistency, and clarity of the findings, the results should be disseminated to stakeholders and other interested parties (e.g., researchers and policymakers). The medium through which the findings are disseminated should reach a wide audience. This includes creating reader-friendly reports (e.g., one-page synopsis of the program, the program's goals, and the outcomes of the analysis); publishing the findings on a public website; and presenting the findings at local, state, and national conferences.

IMPLEMENTING CQI INTO CIP PRACTICE

Step 10: Build a Plan for Sustainability

Steps 1 through 9 of the process involve integrating CQI into current CIP practice. These steps are vital for ensuring that the process is continually improving and efforts are being made to track data and systems outcomes for the future of this work. These steps are also foundational and necessary for building a plan for sustainability of projects. Drawing from steps 1-9, a plan can be created to ensure forward movement. The NV CIP Business Process (see Appendix B for a larger version) can be used to illustrate the important CQI components and how they are influencing process and sustainability.



IMPLEMENTING CQI INTO CIP PRACTICE

General Recommendations for CQI'ing the CIP

This guide provides recommendations for a 9-Step process for CQI'ing the CIP. This includes how a CIP may retrofit the current strategic plan to include a CQI focus, as well as how to integrate CQI into new programs and practices that are funded by the CIP to improve outcomes for children and families involved in the child abuse and neglect court system. Some general recommendations for the CIP to facilitate CQI'ing of the process are:

1. **Training of CIP Staff.** Continuous quality improvement may be a new concept to some. As such, it will be important that all persons involved with decision-making related to CQI should be trained so that they have a basic understanding of the importance of CQI, and, when appropriate, a more in-depth understanding of evaluation. Training should be ongoing and discussions of CQI should occur at CIP Committee meetings to ensure all stakeholders understand its importance.
2. **Generating Buy-In with Committee Members and System Stakeholders.** The importance of CQI should be stressed to all stakeholders involved in the child abuse and neglect court system. Integrating the CQI components into the application process and expressing the need for measurement in systems change are both important ways to generate buy-in. This illustrates to stakeholders that measuring progress and making needed changes are important to the CIP.
3. **Ensuring CIP Application Process has a CQI Focus.** Ensuring that all applicants know what is expected of them is vital in the CQI process. By informing fundees early on of the requirements and expectations, they will be better able to track data and report as needed to facilitate a smooth CQI process.
4. **Working with an Expert on CQI (or Evaluation).** Training on CQI provides a basic understanding of the importance of CQI and some of the fundamental framework vital to facilitating CQI of a program. However, there are components of evaluation, data collection, and reporting that may be trickier and require some additional assistance. Building a relationship with a CQI expert, such as someone highly trained in evaluation and knowledgeable of the child welfare system, can help in ensuring the effective CQI'ing of the CIP. The expert can answer questions and advise as needed on projects.
5. **Hiring Evaluation Team for Large Project.** Some projects may be able to collect their own data, but not have the capacity for a larger evaluation that would help them identify processes and outcomes impacted by the program. It may be necessary to hire an independent evaluator to do larger evaluation, or even research with some of the key programs/activities identified by the CIP-trained staff.

NEVADA Court Improvement Program



Nevada Court Improvement Program

Funding Notice

The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), on behalf of the Nevada Supreme Court and through its State Court Improvement Program (CIP), is currently accepting proposals to fund projects related to the goals and outcomes of the Court Improvement Program as outlined in the CIP current Strategic Plan (see link below). Nevada's Court Improvement Program is a federally funded initiative designed to improve the quality of the court process for children and families involved in abuse, neglect, and dependency proceedings. Attached please find an application for the federal CIP funds administered by AOC. These funds are available to develop and implement data-driven, evidence-based, and outcome-focused best practices that advance meaningful and ongoing collaboration among court, child welfare agency, and other stakeholders to achieve safety, permanency, and well-being for children and families in the child welfare system in a fair and timely manner.

<http://www.nevadajudiciary.us/index.php/viewdocumentsandforms/AOC-Files/Programs/Court-Improvement-Program/>

Purpose and Background

The CIP was created as part of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993, Public Law 103-66, which among other things, provided a portion of federal funds to state court systems to conduct assessments of their foster care and adoption laws and judicial processes, and to develop and implement a plan for system improvement. The Basic CIP grant was reauthorized in 1997, 2001, and 2006. Most recently, in October 2011, the Child and Family Services Improvement Act reauthorized CIP through FY 2016.

CIP is administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children, Youth, and Families. The Nevada Administrative Office of the Courts establishes priorities for, applies for, receives, allocates, disburses, and awards sub-grants or contracts of funds in accordance with federal and state guidelines and provisions.

CIP has existed in Nevada since 1995. It is overseen by the multi-disciplinary CIP Select Committee (Committee, chaired by Supreme Court Justice Nancy Saitta. This group is comprised of family court judges, a tribal representative, the three child welfare agency administrators, a deputy state attorney general, district attorneys, a public defender, legislator, the Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts, several attorneys who actively represent neglected and abused children, the president of the State's Youth Advisory Board, and a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) program. As an ad hoc committee of the Judicial Council of the State of Nevada, the Committee serves in an advisory capacity to the Supreme Court.

Eligibility

This solicitation is open to applicants that include, among others, family dependency courts, governmental agencies, educational institutions, and nonprofit organizations and legal services providing child welfare related services. Any applicant that is not a judicial branch agency must have collaborated with, and secured the support of, the affected dependency court presiding judge before proceeding with the application. CIP funding may not be used to supplant existing funding for an on-going project.

Application Submission Instructions

The application, consisting of the Application Coversheet, Executive Summary and Proposal Narrative, Proposal Budget Summary, and signed Certifications must be submitted as a hard copy with original signatures to:

Katherine Malzahn-Bass, CIP Coordinator
Administrative Office of the Courts
201 S. Carson St Carson City, NV 89702
kmalzahn-bass@nvcourts.nv.gov

Application Format

All applications must include a signed coversheet, executive summary, narrative, and budget summary with the proposal narrative in the following format, as well as all completed forms found in the appendix.

- I. **Application Coversheet:** Please complete and sign the coversheet located in the appendix.
- II. **Executive Summary:** Provide a one page summary of the proposed project.
- III. **Proposal Narrative:** Provide a proposal narrative including items A through G described below.
 - A. **Description of Applicant Agency:** Briefly describe the agency's mission, the type of services provided, the number and type of staff working on related projects, and the relationship of the proposed project to other projects operated by the agency (not to exceed ½ page).
 - B. **Program/Issue:** Describe the problem(s) and/or issue(s) to be addressed by the project and how it (they) correspond(s) to specific outcomes in the current CIP strategic plan (not to exceed ½ page). Please include the outcome number, description of activity, and issue from the current strategic plan.

C. Program Description: Briefly and clearly describe the proposed program and how it will address the problem. Include any anticipated barriers and strategies to address these barriers. Indicate which existing successful model or recognized best practice the program is based on.

- **Goal(s):** State the overall goal(s) of this project (an overarching statement about what the project expects to achieve logically linked to a problem and its causes). This section should clearly communicate how the goal(s) relate to the stated purpose of the Court Improvement Program and CIP funding by including the outcome number, description of activity, and issue from the current CIP strategic plan. Clearly state the intended outcome(s) and statistical impact of the project on the system.
- **Target Population:** Describe the recipient group to be served by the proposed project. State how many persons will be served and how they will be served.
- **Service Area:** Describe the specific geographic area to be served.
- **Proposed Project Staff:** Describe the staff needed for the proposed project including administrative, direct service, and support positions, as well as volunteers to the extent possible.
- **Collaboration for the Proposed Project:** Describe the current or anticipated collaborative efforts with the affected court, child welfare, and other stakeholders.

D. Logic Model: Describe the link between the funding requested and the anticipated measurable and quantifiable outcomes. Using the logic model as an implementation plan, describe the specific activities that will be conducted and the proposed timeframe for completion of the activities and the project. The template to be used is included in the appendix.

E. Evaluation Methodology: All proposals must include an evaluation component. Describe the performance indicators for the project and/or the process you will use to evaluate whether the program has met its goals and its impact on the system. Include activities, processes, outputs, and outcomes that are presented in the logic model.

F. Sustainability Plan: Describe any other sources of funding for the project and how the initiative will be sustained when CIP grant funding expires.

IV. Budget Summary and Narrative: On the budget forms included in the appendix, describe all the project expenditures, how they relate to the project.

A non-Federal share of the budget is required for each proposal submitted at the rate of 33.33% of the total CIP funds awarded as a sub-grant or contract. The 33.33% match may be cash or in-kind contributions. Federal funds may not be used as a match. Thus, if the proposal requests \$900, the applicant must contribute \$300 in non-Federal funds. In accordance with these provisions, funds to be used as the non-Federal share, among other things:

- Must not be Federal grant funds;
- Must not be used to match any other Federal grant;
- Must be used for costs that are otherwise allowable;
- May originate with a third party, public or non-public; and
- May be in-kind contributions of services, property, and/or supplies.

Please record the proposed match funds in the column provided on the Project Budget Summary form.

In the Budget Narrative, please explain the details of your budget, including, but not limited to a description of the match to be provided and details of how and when the funds will be spent.

V. Certifications

The administration of CIP is based on:

- The provisions of Part B of Title IV of the Social Security Act (specifically, §438 of the Act);
- The approved State application and strategic plan, including all assurances, approved amendments or revisions; and
- Applicable Federal regulations, program policies, and instructions.

The applicable Federal regulations are represented in the following certifications:

- Certification 1: Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility, and Voluntary Exclusion
- Certification 2: Drug-free Workplace Requirements
- Certification 3: Restrictions on Lobbying
- Certification 4: Smoking Prohibitions
- Certification 5: Equal Treatment for Faith-based Organizations
- Certification 6: Assurances

Please sign the six certifications found in the appendix and include with the proposal.

Selection Process

A Grants Award Subcommittee will review applications and make recommendations to the CIP Select Committee, which will make the final decisions. The Subcommittee and Select Committee may consider the extent, to which proposal goals are realistic and measureable, whether the proposal meets the goals of the Court Improvement

Program, demonstration of need, demonstration that the applicant has met application requirements, and the overall quality of the application.

Distribution of Grant Funds

The CIP reserves the right to reduce the grant award or terminate the grant at any time for non-compliance or if it becomes apparent that the grant funds are not being used or will not be expended by the end of the grant term.

Budget Adjustments

Sub-grantees and/or contractors may be asked to submit an adjusted budget if the amount awarded did not equal the amount requested.

Reporting Requirements

Sub-grantees will submit quarterly narrative, fiscal, and in-kind reports within the close of each calendar quarter and a final report within one month of the termination of the contract. All reports must be submitted on the forms provided.

APPENDIX

Application Forms:

- Application Cover Sheet
- Logic Model Graphic Explanation
- Logic Model Template
- Budget Summary
- Budget Narrative
- Certifications 1 – 6
- Application Checklist
- Payee Registration - Substitute Form IRS W-9

Reporting Forms:

- Quarterly Program Report
- Quarterly Fiscal Report
- In-Kind Tracking Report
- Final Program Report

The Payee Registration - Substitute Form IRS W-9 can be found on-line at:

<http://www.nevadajudiciary.us/index.php/viewdocumentsandforms/func-startdown/569/>

All other forms can be found on the CIP web site under CIP 2012 Funding Announcement:

<http://www.nevadajudiciary.us/index.php/courtimprovementprogram>

**NEVADA COURT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
APPLICATION COVER SHEET**

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name of Entity: _____
Entity Director: _____
Street Address: _____
Mailing Address: _____
Legal Status of Entity: _____
Board of Directors: _____ Yes (If yes, attach list with names, affiliations, and addresses.) _____ No
Federal Tax ID Number: _____

PROJECT MANAGER CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: _____ Title: _____
Mailing Address: _____
Email Address: _____
Telephone Number: _____ Fax Number: _____

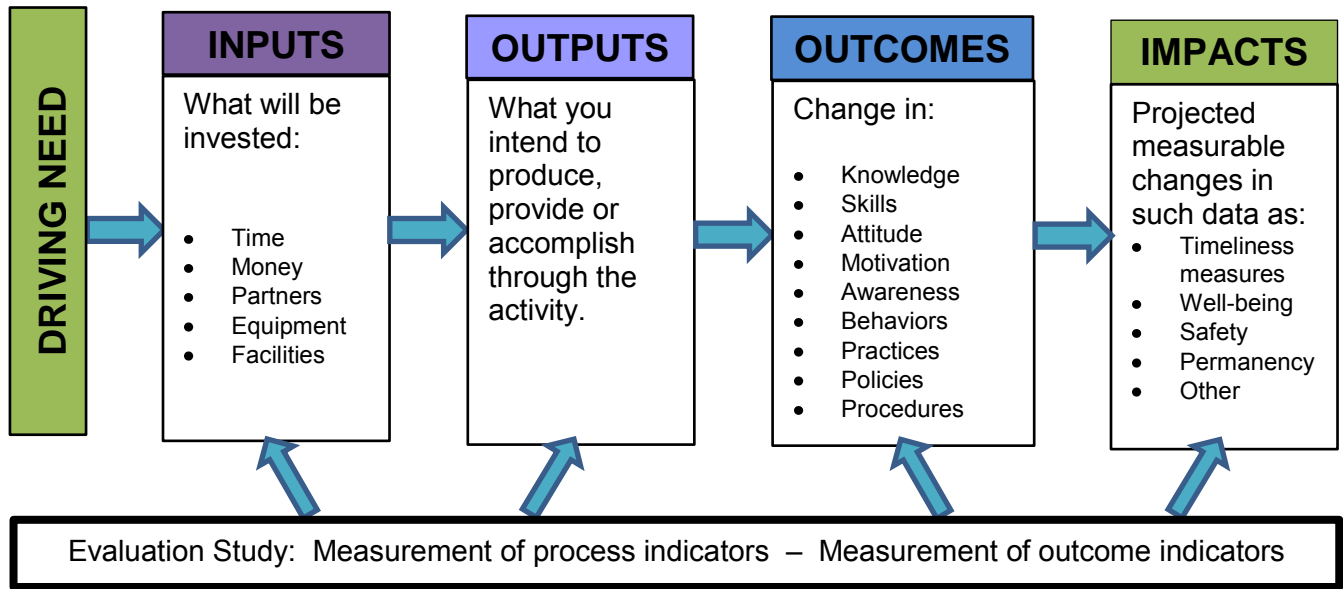
PROJECT INFORMATION

Title of Proposed Project: _____
Is this a new Project? _____ Yes _____ No (If no, how was this project previously funded, for what time period and for what amount :) _____
Total Amount of CIP Funds Requested: _____
Are There Other Funding Sources For This Project? _____ Yes (If Yes, please explain): _____ No
What Outcome Number(s) and Activity/Project Description(s), in the CIP Strategic Plan, does this proposed project help move forward? (List all that apply.)
Outcome Number: _____
Activity/Project Description: _____
Outcome Number: _____
Activity/Project Description: _____
Outcome Number: _____
Activity/Project Description: _____

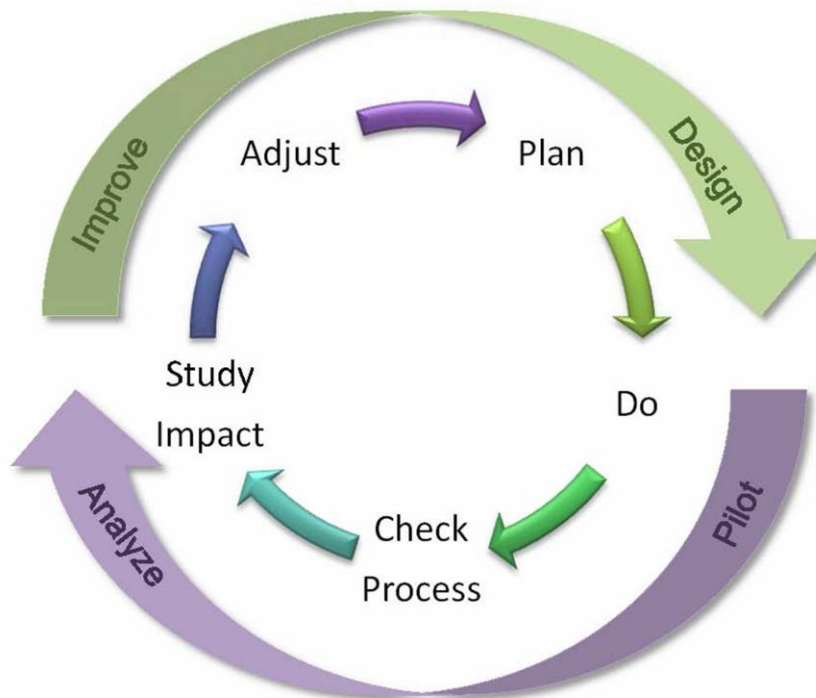
Signature of Authorizing Official **Date**

LOGIC MODEL

Example



PROJECT CONTINUAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT (CQI)



LOGIC MODEL TEMPLATE

PROGRAM/INITIATIVE NAME: _____

Driving Need for Project:

Measurable Objectives:

Target Population:

Evaluation Study: Measurement of process indicators --- Measurement of outcome indicators

Project / Activities	Processes	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
<i>Specific actions or project that will be completed to produce specific outputs and demonstrate progress toward the outcomes and impacts</i>	<i>How output is accomplished, by whom and by when</i>	<i>What you intend to produce, provide or accomplish through the activity.</i>	<i>Changes in:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge • Skills • Attitude • Motivation • Awareness • Behaviors • Practices • Policies • Procedures 	<i>Projected measurable changes in such data as:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeliness measures • Well-being • Safety • Permanency • Other Example: From x% to y

NEVADA COURT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

PROPOSAL BUDGET SUMMARY

Applicant Name: _____

Project Name: _____

Category	Total Project Costs	Funding Amount Requested from CIP	Amount of Cash / In-Kind Match for Each Category *	Revenue Received from Other Funding Sources
Consultants (Contract Services)				
Personnel Costs				
Rent / Utilities / Telephone				
Technology / Equipment				
Copy / Printing				
Postage				
Supplies				
Other Expenses (Please specifically list)				
Total Budget				

*Approved applications will be required to document a 33.33% match of the CIP funded award amount. This match may be cash or in-kind time contributions.

NEVADA COURT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

PROPOSAL BUDGET NARRATIVE

Applicant Name:

Project Name:

Budget Narrative:

Administrative Office of the Courts/Nevada Supreme Court
Court Improvement Program (CIP)

CERTIFICATION # 1

**Certification Regarding
Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion -
Lower Tier Covered Transactions**

Instructions for Certification

1. By signing and submitting this proposal, the prospective lower tier participant is providing the certification set out below.
2. The certification in this clause is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was entered into. If it is later determined that the prospective lower tier participant knowingly rendered an erroneous certification, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government, the department or agency with which this transaction originated may pursue available remedies, including suspension and/or debarment.
3. The prospective lower tier participant shall provide immediate written notice to the person to whom this proposal is submitted if at any time the prospective lower tier participant learns that certification was erroneous when submitted or has become erroneous by reason of changed circumstances.
4. The terms “covered transaction”, “debarred”, “suspended”, “ineligible”, “lower tier covered transaction”, “participant”, “person”, “primary covered transaction”, “principal”, “proposal” and “voluntarily excluded”, as used in this clause, have the meanings set out in the Definitions and Coverage sections of rules implementing Executive Order 12549: 45 CFR Part 76. You may contact the person to whom this proposal is submitted for assistance in obtaining a copy of those regulations or the definitions.
5. The prospective lower tier participant agrees by submitting this proposal that, should the proposed covered transaction be entered into, the prospective lower tier participant shall not knowingly enter into any lower tier covered transaction with a person who is debarred, suspended, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this covered transaction, unless authorized by the department or agency with which this transaction originated.
6. The prospective lower tier participant further agrees by submitting this proposal that the clause titled “Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion – Lower Tier Covered Transactions” will be included, without modification, in all lower tier covered transactions and in all solicitations for lower tier covered transactions.
7. A participant in a covered transaction may rely upon the certification of a prospective participant in a lower tier covered transaction that the prospective participant is not debarred, suspended, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from the covered transaction, unless the participant in a covered transaction knows that the certification is erroneous. A participant may decide the method and frequency of determining the eligibility of the principals. Each participant may, but is not required to, check the Nonprocurement List (of excluded parties).
8. Nothing contained in the foregoing shall be construed to require establishment of a system of records in order to render in good faith the certification required by this clause. The knowledge and information of a participant is not required to exceed that which is normally possessed by a prudent person in the ordinary course of business dealings.
9. Except for transactions authorized under Paragraph 5 of these instructions, if a participant in a covered transaction knowingly enters into a lower tier covered transaction with a person who is debarred, suspended, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction, in addition to other

remedies available to the Federal Government, the department or agency with which this transaction originated may pursue available remedies, including debarment and/or suspension.

**Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension,
Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion –
Lower Tier Covered Transactions**

- (1) The prospective lower tier participant certifies, by submission of this proposal, that neither the prospective participant or the prospective participant's principals is presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in any transaction by any Federal department or agency.
- (2) Where the prospective lower tier participant is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, such prospective participant shall attach an explanation to this proposal.

Suspension. An action taken by a suspending official in accordance with these regulations that immediately excludes a person from participating in a covered transaction for a temporary period, pending completion of an investigation and such legal, debarment, or Program Fraud Civil Remedies Act proceedings as may ensue. A person so excluded is "suspended".

Voluntary Exclusion or Voluntarily Excluded. A status of nonparticipation or limited participation in covered transactions assumed by a person pursuant to the terms of a settlement.

Signature	Title
Grantee Legal/Corporate Name	Date

CERTIFICATION # 2

Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace Requirements

Instructions for Certification

1. By signing and/or submitting this application or grant agreement, the grantee is providing the certification set out below.
2. The certification set out below is a material representation of fact upon which reliance is placed when the agency awards the grant. If it is later determined that the grantee knowingly rendered a false certification, or otherwise violates the requirements of the Drug-Free Workplace Act, the agency, in addition to any other remedies available to the Federal Government, may take action authorized under the Drug-Free Workplace Act.
3. For grantees other than individuals, Alternate I applies.
4. For grantees who are individuals, Alternate II applies.
5. Workplaces under grants, for grantees other than individuals, need not be identified on the certification. If known, they may be identified in the grant application. If grantee does not identify the workplace at the time of the application, or upon award, if there is no application, the grantee must keep the identity of the workplace(s) on file in the office and make the information available for Federal inspection. Failure to identify all known workplaces constitutes a violation of the grantee's drug-free workplace requirements.
6. Workplace identifications must include the actual address of buildings (or parts of buildings) or other areas where work under the grant take place. Categorical descriptions may be used (e.g. all vehicles of a mass authority of State highway department while in operation, State employees in each local unemployment office, performance in concert halls or radio studios).
7. If the workplace identified to the agency changes during the performance of the grant, the grantee shall inform the agency of the change(s) if it previously identified the workplaces in question (see paragraph five).
8. Definitions of terms in the Nonprocurement Suspension and Debarment common rule and Drug-Free Workplace common rule apply to the certification. Grantee's attention is called, in particular, to the following definitions from these rules:

Controlled substances means a controlled substance in Schedules I through V of the Controlled Substance Act (21 U.S.C. #12) and as further defined by regulations (21 CFR 1308.11 through 1308.15);

Conviction means a finding of guilt (including a plea of Nolo Contendere) or imposition of sentence, or both, by any judicial body charged with the responsibility to determine violations of the Federal or State criminal drug statutes;

Employee means the employee of a grantee directly engaged in the performance of work under a grant, including: (I) All direct charge employees; (II) All indirect charge employees under their impact or involvement is insignificant to the performance of the grant; and (III) Temporary personnel and consultants who are directly engaged in the performance of work under the grant and who are on the payroll of the grantee (e.g., volunteers, even if used to meet a matching requirement, consultants or independent contractors not on the grantee's payroll; or employees of sub-recipients or subcontractors in covered workplaces).

Alternate I - Grantees Other Than Individuals

The grantee certifies that it will continue to provide a drug-free workplace by:

- (a) Publishing a statement notifying employees that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the grantee’s workplace and specifying the actions that will be taken against employees for violation of such prohibition;
- (b) Establishing an ongoing drug-free awareness program to inform employees about:
 - (1) The dangers of drug abuse in the workplace;
 - (2) The grantee’s policy of maintaining a drug-free workplace;
 - (3) Any available drug counseling, rehabilitation, and employee assistance programs;
 - (4) The penalties that may be imposed upon employees or drug abuse violations occurring in the workplace;
- (c) Making it a requirement that each employee to be engaged in the performance of the grant be given a copy of the statement required by paragraph (a);
- (d) Notifying the employee in the statement required by paragraph (a) that, as a condition of employment under the grant, the employee will:
 - (1) Abide by the terms of the statement; and
 - (2) Notify the employer in writing of his or her conviction for a violation of a criminal drug statute occurring in the workplace no later than five calendar days after such conviction.
- (e) Notifying the agency in writing, within ten calendar days after receiving notice under paragraph (d) (2) from an employee or otherwise receiving actual notice of such conviction. Employers of convicted employees must provide notice, including position title, to every grant officer or other designee on whose grant activity the convicted employee was working, unless the Federal agency has designated a central point for the receipt of such notices. Notice shall include the identification number(s) of each affected grant;
- (f) Taking one of the following actions, within 30 calendar days of receiving notice under paragraph (d) (2), with respect to any employee who is convicted:
 - (1) Taking appropriate personnel action against such an employee, up to and including termination, consistent with the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; or
 - (2) Requiring such employee to participate satisfactorily in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved for such purposes by Federal, State, or local health, law enforcement, or other appropriate agency; Making a good faith effort to continue to maintain a drug-free workplace through implementation of paragraphs (a), (b), (c), (d), (e) and (f).
- (g) The grantee may insert in the space provided below the site(s) for the performance of work done in connection with the specific grant:

PLACE OF PERFORMANCE:

STREET ADDRESS	CITY	COUNTY	STATE	ZIP CODE
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Are there workplaces on file that are not identified here? YES NO

Alternate II - Grantees Who Are Individuals

- (a) The grantee certifies that, as a condition of the grant, he or she will not engage in the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of controlled substance in conducting any activity with the grant;
- (b) If convicted of a criminal drug offense resulting from a violation occurring during the conduct of any grant activity, he or she will report the conviction, in writing, within 10 calendar days of the conviction, to every grant officer or other designee, unless the Federal agency designates a central point for the receipt of such notices. When notice is made to such a central point, it shall include identification number(s) of each affected grant.

[55 FR 2160, 21702, May 25, 1990]

Signature

Title

Grantee Legal/Corporate Name

Date

Administrative Office of the Courts/Nevada Supreme Court
Court Improvement Program (CIP)

CERTIFICATION # 3

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING
Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families

- (1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan or cooperative agreement.
- (2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form 111, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying", in accordance with its instructions.
- (3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all sub-awards at all tiers (including subcontracts, sub-grants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all sub-recipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by Section 1352, Title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Signature

Title

Grantee Legal/Corporate Name

Date

Administrative Office of the Courts/Nevada Supreme Court
Court Improvement Program (CIP)

CERTIFICATION #4

Certification Regarding Environmental Tobacco Smoke

Public Law 103-227, Part C – Environmental Tobacco Smoke, also known as the Pro-Children Act of 1994 (ACT), requires that smoking not be permitted in any portion of any indoor facility owned or leased or contracted for by an entity and used routinely or regularly for the provision or health, day care, education, or library services to children under the age of 18, if the services are funded by Federal programs either directly or through State or local governments, by Federal grant, contract, loan, or loan guarantee. The law does not apply to children’s services provided in private residences, facilities funded solely by Medicare or Medicaid funds, and portions of facilities used for inpatient drug or alcohol treatment. Failure to comply with the provisions of the law may result in the imposition of a civil monetary penalty of up to \$1,000 per day and/or the imposition of an administrative compliance order on the responsible entity.

By signing and submitting this application, the applicant/grantee certifies compliance with the requirements of the Act. The applicant/grantee further agrees that the language of this certification will be included in any sub-awards which contain provisions for children’s services and that all sub-grantees shall certify accordingly.

Signature

Title

Grantee Legal/Corporate Name

Date

Administrative Office of the Courts/Nevada Supreme Court
Court Improvement Program (CIP)

CERTIFICATION # 5

**Certification Regarding
Equal Treatment for Faith-Based Organizations**

A final rule of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) went into effect on August 16, 2004, which created, among other things, a new Part 87 Equal Treatment for Faith-Based Organizations, and revised the Department's uniform administrative requirements at 45 CFR Parts 74, 92 and 96 to incorporate the requirements of Part 87.

The Administration of Children and Families (ACF) is committed to providing State Administrators, State Grant Managers and subsequently sub grantees with the most accurate and concise information to help guide program activities. This regulation addresses several key Equal Treatment issues that require full compliance by Federally-funded State Programs, sub grantees, grantees and contractors.

Issues include:

- Nondiscrimination against religious organizations;
- Ability of religious organizations to maintain their religious character, including the use of space in their facilities, without removing religious art, icons, scriptures, or other religious symbols;
- Prohibition against the use of Federal funds to finance inherently religious activities, except where Federal funds are provided to religious organizations as a result of a genuine and independent private choice of a beneficiary or through other indirect funding mechanisms, such as certificates or vouchers; and
- Application of State or local government laws to religious organizations.

NOTE: Neither the Department (DHHS) nor any State or local government and other intermediate organizations receiving funds under any Department (DHHS) program shall, in the selection of service providers, discriminate for or against an organization on the basis of the organization's religious character or affiliation.

It is imperative that State sub grantees, grantees and contractors policies reflect the Equal Treatment Regulations.

The full text of the final rule may be accessed via the Internet at <http://www.hhs.gov/fbci/regulations/index.html>

This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by 45 CFR Part 87, Equal Treatment for Faith-Based Organizations as revised in the Department's uniform Administrative requirements identified above. Any organization that fails to file the required certification shall be subject to disqualification of their application.

Signature

Title

Grantee Legal/Corporate Name

Date

Administrative Office of the Courts/Nevada Supreme Court
Court Improvement Program (CIP)

CERTIFICATION # 6

Certification of Assurances

The applicant certifies that: To the best of my knowledge and belief, information in this proposal is true and correct, the document has been duly authorized by the governing body of the applicant and applicant will comply with the following assurances if the assistance is approved.

1. The entity is a non-profit organization, or government agency, incorporated and qualified in the State of Nevada and has filed all required reports with the Secretary of State, **OR**,
2. The entity is an incorporated for-profit organization, qualified to conduct business in the State of Nevada.
3. The non-profit organization is governed by a board of trustees, which reflects the racial, ethnic, economic and social composition of the State of Nevada.
4. The entity has access to and can document a 33.33% match from sources other than the Federal Government, if applicable.
5. The entity requires employees, volunteers and trustees to maintain the confidentiality of any information, which would identify dependent children, parents of dependent children, or foster parents.
6. The entity provides services without any discrimination on the basis of race, religion, color, handicap, age, sex, marital status, national origin or ancestry.
7. The entity will complete required financial reports, as well as a final performance report and will cooperate with the AOC regarding any financial audits or program reviews. The entity has workman's compensation coverage, and other proof of insurance as required, and has supplied the AOC with evidence of this coverage.
8. The entity has a research confidentiality policy that states that dependent children's and parents of dependent children's identity will not be released for research purposes.

Name and Title

Signature

Date

Chairperson of the Board

Signature

Date

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

To ensure that you have included all of the following items in your proposal, please place a check mark next to each item listed below. The application should be assembled in the order in which these items are listed. Place this form at the back of the proposal packet.

- Completed and Signed Cover Sheet
- Proposal Executive Summary and Narrative
- Completed Budget Summary and Narrative
- Proof of Liability Insurance
- Signed Certifications 1 thru 6
- Payee Registration - Substitute Form IRS W-9
- One Completed Application with Original Signatures
- Application Checklist

STATE OF NEVADA

VENDOR REGISTRATION



Mail or fax to:
STATE CONTROLLER'S OFFICE
 555 E WASHINGTON AVE STE 4300
 LAS VEGAS NV 89101-1071
 PHONE: 702/486-3810 or 702/486-3856
 FAX: 702/486-3813

All sections are mandatory and require completion. IRS Form W-9 will not be accepted in lieu of this form.

1. NAME For proprietorship, provide proprietor's name in first box and DBA in second box.

Legal Business Name, Proprietor's Name or Individual's Name	Doing Business As (DBA)
---	-------------------------

2. ADDRESS/CONTACT INFORMATION

Address A – Physical address of

Company Headquarters Individual's Residence

Is this a US Post Office deliverable address? Yes No

Address B

Additional Remittance – PO Box, Lockbox or another physical location.

Address			Address		
Address			Address		
City	State	Zip Code	City	State	Zip Code
E-mail Address			E-mail Address		
Phone Number		Fax Number	Phone Number		Fax Number
Primary Contact			Primary Contact		

3. ORGANIZATION TYPE AND TAX IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (TIN) Check only **one** organization type and supply the applicable Social Security Number (SSN) or Employee Identification Number (EIN). **For proprietorship, provide SSN or EIN, not both.**

<input type="checkbox"/> Individual (SSN)	<input type="checkbox"/> LLC tax classification:	SSN
<input type="checkbox"/> Sole Proprietorship (SSN or EIN)	<input type="checkbox"/> Disregarded Entity	Name associated with SSN:
<input type="checkbox"/> Partnership (EIN)	<input type="checkbox"/> Partnership	EIN
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporation (EIN)	<input type="checkbox"/> Corporation	New TIN? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes – Provide previous TIN & effective date.
<input type="checkbox"/> Government (EIN)		Previous TIN: _____ Date: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Tax Exempt/Nonprofit (EIN)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Trust/estate (SSN or EIN)		

OTHER INFORMATION Check all that apply.

<input type="checkbox"/> Doctor or Medical Facility	<input type="checkbox"/> In-State (Nevada)	<input type="checkbox"/> Nevada Business License Number:
<input type="checkbox"/> Attorney or Legal Facility	<input type="checkbox"/> DBE Certificate #:	

4. ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER *Per NRS 227, payment to all payees of the State of Nevada will be electronic.*

Complete the following information **AND** provide a copy of a voided imprinted check for the account. If there are no checks for the account, restate the bank information on company letterhead. Individuals may provide a signed letter. **A deposit slip will not be accepted.** For a savings account, provide a signed letter with the bank information. Information on this form and the support documentation **must match**. Allow 10 working days for activation.

The information is for address <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> Both		
Bank Name	Bank Account Type <input type="checkbox"/> Checking <input type="checkbox"/> Savings	Provide an e-mail address for receiving Direct Deposit Remittance Advices.
Transit Routing Number	Bank Account Number	

Do not have a bank account.

5. IRS FORM W-9 CERTIFICATION AND SIGNATURE

Under penalties of perjury, I certify that:

- The number shown on this form is my correct taxpayer identification number (or I am waiting for a number to be issued to me), **and**
- I am not subject to backup withholding because: (a) I am exempt from backup withholding, or (b) I have not been notified by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) that I am subject to backup withholding as a result of a failure to report all interest or dividends, or (c) the IRS has notified me that I am no longer subject to backup withholding, **and**
- I am a U.S. citizen or other U.S. person (as defined by IRS Form W-9 rev January 2011).

Cross out item 2 above if you have been notified by the IRS that you are currently subject to backup withholding because you have failed to report all interest and dividends on your tax return.

The Internal Revenue Service does not require your consent to any provision of this document other than the certifications required to avoid backup withholding.

Signature	Print Name & Title of Person Signing Form	Date
-----------	---	------

FOR STATE CONTROLLER'S OFFICE USE ONLY		Name of State agency contact & phone number:
Primary 1099 Vendor <input type="checkbox"/> 1099 Indicator <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Entered By _____ Date _____	Comments _____

KTLVEN-01 Rev 07/11

Registration Instructions

General Instructions:

1. The substitute IRS Form W-9 is for the use of United States entities only. Non-US entities must submit an IRS Form W-8.
2. Type or legibly print all information except for signature.
3. All sections are mandatory and require completion.

Specific Information:

1. NAME

- a. Partnership, Corporation, Government or Nonprofit – Enter legal business name as registered with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in first box. If the company operates under another name, provide it in the second box.
- b. Proprietorship – Enter the proprietor's name in the first box and the business name (DBA) in the second box.
- c. Individual – Name must be as registered with the Social Security Administration (SSA) for the Social Security number (SSN) listed in Section 3.

2. ADDRESS/CONTACT INFORMATION

- a. Address A – *If the address is non-deliverable by the United States Postal Service, complete both Address A and B sections.*
Company – Provide physical location of company headquarters.
Individual – Provide physical location of residence.
E-mail – Provide complete e-mail address when available.
Telephone Number – Include area code.
Fax Number – Include area code.
Primary Contact – Person (and phone number or extension) to be contacted for payment-related questions or issues.
- b. Address B – Provide additional remittance address and related information when appropriate.

3. ORGANIZATION TYPE AND TAX IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (TIN)

- a. Individual – A person that has no association with a business.
- b. Proprietorship – A business owned by one person.
- c. Partnership – A business with more than one owner and not a corporation.
- d. Corporation – A business that may have many owners with each owner liable only for the amount of his investment in the business.
- e. LLC – Limited Liability Company. **Must mark appropriate classification – disregarded entity, partnership or corporation.**
- f. Government – The federal government, a state or local government, or instrumentality, agency, or subdivision thereof.
- g. Tax Exempt/Nonprofit – Organization exempt from federal income tax under section 501(a) or 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
- h. Doctor or Medical Facility – Person or facility related to practice of medicine.
- i. Attorney or Legal Facility – Person or facility related to practice of law.
- j. In-state – Nevada entity.
- k. Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) – A small business enterprise that is at least 51% owned and controlled by one or more socially and economically disadvantaged individuals. **Provide certification number.** See <http://www.nevadadbe.com> for certification information.
- l. Nevada Business License number – Current NV business license number which was issued by the NV Secretary of State.
- m. The Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) is always a 9-digit number. It will be a Social Security Number (SSN) assigned to an individual by the SSA or an Employer Identification Number (EIN) assigned to a business or other entity by the IRS.
Per the IRS, use the owner's social security number for a proprietorship.

4. ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER

Per NRS 227, payment to all payees of the State of Nevada will be electronic. Provide a copy of a voided imprinted check or restate bank information on letterhead. **A deposit slip will not be accepted.** Information on this form and the support documentation **must match.**

- a. Bank Name – The name of the bank where account is held.
- b. Bank Account Type – Indicate whether the account is checking or savings.
- c. Transit Routing Number – Enter the 9-digit Transit Routing Number.
- d. Bank Account Number – Enter bank account number.
- e. Direct Deposit Remittance Advice – Direct Deposit Remittance Advices are sent via e-mail when possible. Companies should provide an address that will not change, i.e. accounting@business.com.

5. IRS FORM W-9 CERTIFICATION AND SIGNATURE

- a. The Certification is copied from IRS Form W-9 (rev. January 2011). See IRS Form W-9 for further information.
- b. The Signature should be provided by the individual, owner, officer, legal representative or other authorized person of the entity listed on the form.
- c. Print the name and title, when applicable, of the person signing the form.
- d. Enter the date the form was signed. Forms over three years old will not be processed.

Do not complete any remaining areas. They are for State of Nevada use only.

Mail or Fax signed form to:

NEVADA STATE CONTROLLER'S OFFICE
555 E WASHINGTON AVE STE 4300
LAS VEGAS NV 89101-1071
Fax: 702/486-3813

Sending to any other location will delay processing.

Questions can be directed to 702/486-3810 or 702/486-3856 or e-mailed to vendor@controller.state.nv.us.

NEVADA COURT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

QUARTERLY PROGRAM REPORT

PROGRAM NAME:

Contract #

- Reporting for:**
- January - March (due April 30th)
 - April - June (due July 30th)
 - July – September (due October 30th)
 - October - December (due January 30th)

As outlined in the proposal logic model, describe the project activities during the quarter. For example: the project plan, design and pilot; impact analysis; study of project impact; project improvement and adjustment.

Describe the progress in terms of achieving measurable objectives of the grant award: What specific objective changes have occurred. Please provide data and process of collecting data.

Describe any problems, delays or adverse conditions you have experienced in achieving the stated objectives. Include a statement of action taken, or contemplated and any assistance needed to resolve the situation.

Describe any activities scheduled for the next reporting period.

Print Name

Title

Signature

Date

NEVADA COURT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

QUARTERLY FISCAL REPORT

Program Name: _____

Contract # _____

Date Report Prepared: _____

Reporting for:

- January - March (due April 30th)
- April - June (due July 30th)
- July - September (due October 30th)
- October - December (due January 30th)

Category	Total Amount Received from CIP To Date	Total Amount Spent Previous Reporting Periods	Total Amount Spent Current Reporting Period	Total Amount Spent to Date
Consultants (Contract Services)				
Personnel Costs				
Rent / Utilities / Telephone				
Technology / Equipment				
Copy / Printing				
Postage				
Supplies				
Other Expenses (Please specifically list)				
Misc.				
Total				

IN-KIND TRACKING REPORT

Subgrantee Name: _____

Contract Number: _____

Awarded Amount: _____

In-Kind Required: _____

- Reporting for: January - March (due April 30th)
 April - June (due July 30th)
 July - September (due October 30th)
 October - December (due January 30th)

NAME / DESCRIPTION / CASH MATCH	MEETING / PROJECT / EVENT	# HRS	Hourly Amount	Date	Total
TOTAL FOR THIS REPORT PERIOD					

NEVADA COURT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

FINAL PROGRAM REPORT

PROGRAM NAME:

Contract #

- Reporting for:**
- January - March (due April 30th)
 - April - June (due July 30th)
 - July – September (due October 30th)
 - October - December (due January 30th)

As outlined in the proposal logic model, describe the project activities during the quarter. For example: the project plan, design and pilot; impact analysis; study of project impact; project improvement and adjustment

Describe evaluations conducted and the results, including all relevant statistics concerning planned outcomes and impact, in the logic model.

1) Outcomes:

2) Impact:

Explain your progress in terms of achieving the project’s stated measurable objectives, in the logic model.

Print Name Title

Signature Date

FOUNDATIONAL NEVADA CIP BUSINESS PROCESS

