

## Court Improvement Program

# Community Improvement Councils Quarterly News April-June 2015

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Judge Katherine Lucero to Facilitate

**2015 Community Improvement Council Summit**

September 30 - October 2, 2015

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**Judges Identify Theme**

**for**

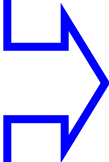
**2015 Community Improvement Council Summit**

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.

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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

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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.

**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 10<sup>th</sup> 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 10<sup>th</sup> 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 Kloset 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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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](http://nevadajudiciary.us/index.php/courtimprovementprogram)

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