

CINA Court Improvement Committee
Meeting Agenda for
Friday January 7, 2011
10:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Snowden Administration Building
820 W. 4th Avenue

Attendance:

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|---|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Master Hitchcock | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anita Alves | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Judge Blankenship |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Judge Rindner | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Melissa Stone | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amanda Metivier |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Linda Beecher | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Diane Payne | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wendy Lyford |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Judge Esch | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Judge Tan | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Judge Collins |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kristie Lawton | <input type="checkbox"/> Judge Devaney | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lucille Johnson |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Judge Reese | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carla Raymond | <input type="checkbox"/> Maude Hopson |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Susanne DiPietro | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Judge White | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Judge Gleason |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Francine Eddy-Jones | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lisa Rieger | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lynn Biggs |

Also attending: Karen Largent, Stefanie Winters.

Minutes of August 2010 approved with no changes.

Next Meeting: Friday, May 13, 2011 at 10:30 in Anchorage

Subcommittee Reports

Family Contact. The subcommittee is focusing on training for OCS staff and visitation grantees. The subcommittee has worked with OCS/grantee groups in Fairbanks and is going to Juneau and Ketchikan next week. Anchorage, Palmer, Kenai and Nome are the other grantees. The purpose of the workshops is to help each OCS office and its grantee to design a workable system for sharing referrals and information. In the past, lack of a good communication system between the OCS office and the grantee in some locations contributed to problems of either over-using or under-using the supervised visitation resources.

Education. No new projects.

Mediation and Family Group Conferencing. Largent reported referrals were good in Juneau for the mediation and family group conferencing programs, where many referrals are initiated by the parties. Due to turnover and passage of time, Ms. Largent is proposing another FGC training in Juneau in the spring. Anchorage and Palmer referrals are still slower than last year. Fairbanks continues

to have a very high rate of referrals, most initiated in the courtroom with the consent of the parties. Kenai and Bethel referrals are about the same.

Substance Abuse - Shields Initiative. OCS and Division of Behavioral Health have hired Frank Pruitt to conduct a needs assessment and initial project planning. The report will be due in July and the deliverables should include at least one grant. At this point, Judge Tan will continue as liaison but due to ethical considerations will refrain from participating in any project decisions.

DiPietro reported that the Alaska Annual School for Addiction conference, scheduled for the week of May 2, will for the first time include a track focused on substance abuse and child welfare, with workshops designed for judges and lawyers. OCS has a technical assistance contract with the National Resource Center for Substance Abuse and Child Welfare to design the curriculum. The goal of the track is to educate child welfare professionals about substance abuse treatment but also to help treatment providers understand the special challenges of treating parents in the child welfare system.

ICWA. Diane Payne reported that the subcommittee had a brief meeting to review the evaluations of the October 6 ICWA workshop, and had preliminary discussions about recommendations for improving the curriculum based on that feedback.

Rural Issues. The subcommittee met for the first time and discussed four projects: study how to deliver services in rural Alaska (for example, video, web cam, skype); survey OCS staff and other state employees in the rural areas regarding adequacy of technology that they use; measure the success/outcomes of family contact and other services at the village level; and _____?

Education and Foster Care. Ms. Metivier reported that OCS and the Anchorage School District recently finalized a protocol for electronically sharing information about school-age youth in foster care. The goal of the project is to enable ASD better to identify and meet the needs of foster youth, including transportation and transferring of enrollment information.

Youth in Court Booklet. The booklet was distributed to the committee members. Kristie Lawton will let us know how many copies OCS needs. The court system will distribute it to judges and magistrates, and will put a link to it on the web site.

Permanency Roundtables. Ms. Biggs and Ms. Metivier explained the program again, which has been implemented in 18 states and in some locations has been associated with reductions in the number of youth in care. Ms. Biggs reported that Casey is in a position to sponsor the requisite “permanency values” training in Alaska in March. The committee discussed which cases should be targeted. OCS had proposed a focus on youth who are 16 or older, have been in care for more than two years, and who have a goal of APPLA (67 cases). Judge Rindner and other judges indicated that some of their cases also could benefit from a permanency roundtable and expressed interest in being able to “refer” a case to the roundtable. The subcommittee agreed to consider how to create a referral mechanism that incorporates priorities expressed by OCS and the court system. **The subcommittee will meet FEBRUARY 8 at noon.**

Judge Gleason reported on a permanency project being undertaken in the Anchorage trial court. Court staff are identifying post-termination cases in which the adoption is stalled or in which no adoptive home has been identified. Once those cases are identified, they will be set on for frequent status hearings before a master who will encourage the parties to move forward.

HB 126. Ms. Raymond reported that the regulations implementing this legislation are still in revision. The committee discussed several legal ambiguities created by the law, including whether the parent should be considered a party to a reopened case, how a case would be reopened, who would be notified, etc. The committee discussed options for resolving the implementation problems, including a new CINA Rule or a request to the bill sponsor for amendment.

Judge Gleason reported that the Family Law Self Help Center is developing a form for parents to file for custody in situations in which a CINA case is pending. The form will be similar to the existing custody form but will be customized to take into account special issues that arise in OCS cases.

2:00 p.m. Adjourn