

CINA Court Improvement Committee

Meeting Minutes for
Friday May 13, 2011
10:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Snowden Administration Building
820 W. 4th Avenue

Attendance:

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

Kristie Swanson attended for Christy Lawton.

Other participants: Karen Largent (telephonic), Stefanie Winters.

Minutes of January 2011 approved with one change.

Next Meeting: Friday, August 19, 2011 at 10:30 in Anchorage

Subcommittee Reports

Family Contact. The subcommittee has conducted 4 trainings since our last meeting. It continues to focus on training for OCS staff and visitation grantees to facilitate a conversation about how services are best delivered in each community. The subcommittee has worked with OCS/grantee groups in Fairbanks, Juneau, Ketchikan, Anchorage, Palmer, and Kenai. Nome is scheduled for June 6.

In addition the committee was invited (for the second year) to speak to resource families at the statewide conference in Soldotna on May 12. Resource families continue to need support and reassurance to successfully implement the family contact policy. The group has concluded that the additional support needed by resource families probably is outside the scope of its work. The subcommittee recommends that OCS and the Center for Resource Families be engaged more directly on this project, and it will discuss this at its next meeting.

Education. The subcommittee approved scholarships for a number of state agency and tribal attorneys to attend the Child Welfare NITA Training in

Colorado this month. The subcommittee intends to continue to offer individual and team scholarships, to plan for a statewide conference in 2012, and to offer financial support for regional, interagency conferences in the 2011 budget cycle.

In addition, the subcommittee is exploring a potential partnership with the University of Alaska to provide the infrastructure for interdisciplinary child welfare classes for participants in the legal system, including in-person and distance modes of delivery. The subcommittee is working with the ICWA subcommittee to standardize the ICWA curriculum in such a way that it could be offered live a few times a year, and possibly also offered as distance learning. The long-term goal is to develop a 40-hour curriculum for newer CINA practitioners to be offered live one or more times per year. That curriculum is only in the very beginning stages of being developed, but the subcommittee is tentatively looking at the so-called “red book” as a guide.

Mediation and Family Group Conferencing. Largent reported referrals were up in some locations and down in others. A Family Group Conference training was held in Juneau last month. New FGC facilitators are being recruited for Juneau because referrals are increasing and two of the existing facilitators are moving away. A year-end report will be available at the next meeting.

The group discussed that several other areas of the state have expressed interest in family group conferencing. Although successful implementation of this decision-making process is difficult to achieve, CIP is willing to offer technical assistance to those who are interested. Largent agreed that the program’s effectiveness should be evaluated. Ms. Biggs offered that Casey might have evaluation materials we could use.

Independent Living Subcommittee. (Written report submitted by Tammy Ketchum-Wallette). Discussion: Is judicial representation necessary on this subcommittee? PJ Gleason offered to check with 3rd judicial district judges to see if there is interest in participating. Lisa Rieger offered to contact Kristen English about joining the subcommittee.

Substance Abuse - Shields Initiative. (Written report submitted by Tammy Ketchum-Wallette). Discussion: The needs assessment contracted by OCS should be completed by July.

ICWA. The group is researching with the Education Subcommittee the best way to deliver the ICWA curriculum. Core faculty plan to divide the curriculum into 60-minute segments for possible remote viewing/e-learning delivery. Additional faculty needs to be developed, as does a pre- and post-testing process.

The subcommittee asked the larger group to address the problem of telephonic participation of parties. One issue is helping judges to manage hearings at which multiple parties are telephonic. The subcommittee will develop a checklist of best practices and reminders that can be used by all parties to ensure that everyone has a chance to speak and participate fully. There also were complaints about differences in procedures that parties who wish to participate telephonically are asked to use (i.e, call in or wait to be called), problems created for telephonic parties when hearings do not start on time (they cannot get through because the line is in use, or they inadvertently call in to the courtroom when the parties from the earlier case are still talking), problems when the parties forget to tell the judge that a party wishes to participate telephonically, problems with the quality of the audio (the people on the phone cannot hear anyone in the courtroom when they are speaking, the telephonic party's voice is faint). The Committee agreed to address these technical/procedural issues. Susanne will prepare a report for review at the next meeting.

Rural Issues. Judge Devaney reported that the pilot project the court was trying to develop with OCS to use Naltrexone or SCRAM bracelets in CINA cases had stalled due to the departure of the person at OCS who had been working on that project. The subcommittee also will look into the functioning of the centralized report of harm system.

There was a question about implications of the *Tanana* decision. Ms. Raymond reported that OCS is revising its policies and procedures in light of the decision. There may also be a proposal for a court rule. OCS will be issuing a Program Instruction.

Education and Foster Care. Deferred until next time when Ms. Metivier will be present.

OCS Annual Progress Report. Ms. Swanson reported on the Family Services Plan 2010-2014 which is on OCS' web site and contains comprehensive information about all of OCS' programs and initiatives. OCS has met seven out of its nine PIP goals. The two remaining goals are decreasing the number of cases

with a goal of APPLA (another planned, permanent living arrangement) and increasing worker visits with parents. Ms. Swanson shared data from OCS' computerized system showing that OCS has significantly improved its performance in several key areas. Also, OCS is considering entering into IVE maintenance agreements with its tribal partners. WPIC is planning a "mini leadership conference" on September 19-21.

Permanency Roundtables. Ms. Biggs reported that the orientation in Juneau was small but well received. Next week will be the permanency values training, which is critical to creating a sense of urgency and shifting values (experience shows that the main barrier to permanency is attitude and bias). The roundtables themselves will occur June 13-17, including one day of skill building. Monitoring and evaluation is an important part of the effort.

HB 126. Ms. Raymond reported that the regulations were out for comment. A court rule might be necessary.

FCC Evaluation. A draft version of the report was circulated. Members were solicited to form an ad hoc subcommittee to review the draft and make recommendations: Rieger, Gleason, Beecher, Raymond, Alves, Rindner, Ketchum-Wallette. Judge Gleason asked that the group also consider the question of what is the best way to provide judicial services in Anchorage, in light of impending personnel changes. Beecher mentioned that the ABA has issued a report on best judicial practices in CINA cases and she agreed to send it to the group.

2:00 p.m. Adjourn