

TRIAL COURT ADMINISTRATION

Policy 520

December 15, 2006

COURT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT COMMITTEE

SECTION 1. Establishment and Purpose

A committee for the Court Improvement Project is developed under the auspices of the Administrative Council, in cooperation with Indian tribes, to provide recommendations to the Council on Court Improvement Project activities for the following purposes:

1. To conduct assessments of the roles, responsibilities and effectiveness of state courts in carrying out state laws requiring proceedings relating to foster care and adoption conducted by or under the supervision of the courts;
2. Implement improvements the highest state courts deem necessary as a result of the assessments;
 - a. To provide for the safety, well-being, and permanence of children in foster care as set forth by the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) and any other federal or state law regarding child welfare issues.
 - b. To implement a corrective action plan, as necessary, resulting from reviews of child and family service programs.
3. To ensure that the safety, permanence and well-being needs of children are met in a timely and complete manner; and
4. To provide for the training of judges, attorneys and other legal personnel in child welfare cases.

SECTION 2. Membership

A. The Committee shall consist of members appointed by the Chief Justice or as indicated:

1. Four district court judges (one from each Administrative Unit);
2. One judicial referee;
3. One juvenile court director appointed by the state court administrator;
4. One trial court administrative personnel appointed by the state court administrator;

5. Director of Children and Family Services Division of the Department of Human Services;
6. One state's attorney appointed by the State's Attorney Association;
7. Director of Indigent Defense Services or designee; and
8. Director of North Dakota Indian Affairs Commission.

B. The Chief Justice shall appoint one of the district court judges as chair.

SECTION 3. Terms of Service

All judicial branch appointees shall serve a period of three years and be eligible for reappointment not to serve more than three consecutive terms.

(Comment: With the exception of the state's attorney representative, the other three members are individual department heads and it would be difficult to limit terms.)

SECTION 4. Staff Support

The committee will be staffed by the state court administrator's office.

Approved by Administrative Council 12/15/06