

Court Improvement Project Taskforce Charter

I. Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the Court Improvement Project Taskforce is to provide a forum to consider issues, review data, develop plans and promote system enhancements related to deprived and delinquent/unruly youth in order to improve outcomes for North Dakota children and families.

II. GOALS

In carrying out its purpose the Court Improvement Project Taskforce will be guided by these goals:

- a. To oversee the implementation of the goals of the Court Improvement Project Grant;**
- b. To oversee the implementation of the goals of the Dual Status Youth Initiative;**
- c. To address issues, legislation, data and practices affecting multiple systems;**
- d. To share information, data and resources;**
- e. To develop system wide plans;**
- f. To identify and implement best practices;**
- g. To provide for the training of judges, attorneys and other personnel in child welfare cases, and**
- h. To minimize duplication of effort.**

III. Make-up of Group

A. Executive Members:

- Court Improvement Project Coordinator – Heather Traynor
- Two trial court judges/referees - Hon. Connie Cleveland, Referee Dan Gast
- One Legal Counsel for Indigent Defense - Travis Finck
- One State’s Attorney - Ashley Lies
- Title IV-B/IV-E agency administrator - Director of Children and Family Services or designee - Cory Pedersen
- Juvenile Court Coordinator – Cathy Ferderer
- Director of ND Indian Affairs Commission or designee – Brad Hawk
- One ND Department of Human Services Legal Advisory Unit Attorney – Jonathan Alm
- One County Social Service Zone Director – Kim Jacobson
- One Juvenile Court Director - Carrie Hjellming
- One DHS Behavioral Health Division Representative – Pam Sagness
- One Division of Juvenile Services Representative – Tony Kozojed
- One Department of Public Instruction Representative – Anne Linden

Executive Members will be appointed by their respective agency.

Other standing members to be invited:

- CFSP/APSR/IV-B/IV-E Agency CQI Lead – Lauren Sauer
- IV-B/IV-E agency representative responsible for the CFSR/PIP – Leanne Miller
- IV-B/IV-E agency perm director –
- IV-B/IV-E agency training lead – Amy Ohlke
- CBCAP Lead - Tracy Miller
- Guardian Ad Litem Administrator – Barb Oliger
- State ICWA Specialist – Harmony Bercier
- ND Legal Services – Jen Lee

B. Other members may be added if requested by an Executive Member and by the Taskforce.

C. Terms – Executive Members appointed by a designated position which is a singular position shall serve an unexpired term. All other Executive Members shall be appointed for three year terms. A member may not serve more than three consecutive terms. A former member who served three consecutive terms is eligible for reappointment after a six-year break in service. Each member may serve until the member's successor is appointed.

Other members shall serve a term as specified by the Taskforce at the time of appointment or as modified by the Taskforce following appointment.

D. Staff – The Executive Members will select a member to staff the Taskforce.

E. Chair - The CIP Coordinator will Chair the Taskforce.

F. Duties of Chair – The duties of the chair are to convene regular (no less than quarterly) meetings of the Taskforce; to solicit input from the membership on issues brought before the Taskforce; to prepare a quarterly report of activities; to draft correspondence related to the work of the Taskforce; to refer issues to the Juvenile Policy Board or other committees as needed; to serve as spokesperson for the Taskforce; to ensure that decisions of the Taskforce are accurately recorded in the notes; to appoint working groups as needed.

IV. Duties and Scope of Authority

A. Decision Makers – The Executive Members will be the voting members of the group. All members are free to bring issues and ideas to the Taskforce for discussion and consideration.

B. Process for Making Decisions – Decision making will be an ongoing process of evaluating ideas, addressing problems, considering alternatives, making choices, acting on an approved course of action, modifying or abandoning an approved goal, assigning work to an appropriate entity and providing final approval for any required reports. Following a period of discussion which involves all members, the Executive Members will hold a vote on issues that change policy and/or practice, have a fiscal impact, or require rule changes or legislative action. Approval of a motion requires a simple majority of more than 50% of the Executive Members present. Those recommendations will then be sent to the Juvenile Policy Board and/or DHHS Administrative Body for further consideration.

C. Documents – Documents refers to manuals, plans, grants, and similar documents. The Taskforce may develop new documents and review current documents. Any documents that create or change currently policy and/or practice must be voted upon and sent to the Juvenile Policy Board and/or DHHS Administrative Body for consideration.

D. Planning – Planning refers to the activities needed to carry out projects approved by the CIP Taskforce. Planning will occur around the safety, well-being, and permanency of children and families in the child welfare and juvenile justice system. This is inclusive of but not limited to: Court Improvement Project Strategic Plan goals and objectives, juvenile court best practice, implementing State and Federal legislation, training, the Children and Families Services Plan, and the Children and Families Services Program Improvement Plan.

E. Implementation – Implementation refers to the documentation and training required to ensure that all activities authorized by the CIP Taskforce are disseminated promptly and consistently within the state.

F. Data Collection and Reporting – Reporting refers to the assessment of activities and action taken by the CIP Taskforce. The CIP Coordinator will collect and provide data to the CIP Taskforce to inform decision making as well as provide reports on the progress and implementation of activities and actions of the CIP Taskforce.

V. Operating Procedures

A. Meetings – The CIP Coordinator will convene regular (no less than quarterly) meetings of the Taskforce with a frequency that ensures a prompt response to issues and requests presented to the Taskforce. At the discretion of the CIP Coordinator, meetings may be held by web meeting, telephone conference, interactive video or in-person. The structure of the meetings is informal.

B. Duties of Members to solicit input – Members of the Taskforce represent respective agencies and/or constituencies and have an obligation to regularly attend meetings and

inform their constituents as to the activities of the Taskforce, to actively solicit input from their agency and/or constituency and to promptly distribute all new and updated documentation to their agency and/or constituency

C. Meeting Notes – Staff for the Taskforce shall keep notes from each meeting documenting the issues considered by the Taskforce and any decision made by the Executive Members of the Taskforce.

D. Referral of Issues to the Juvenile Policy Board and/or the DHHS Administrative Body and any other identified administrative body that has an obvious interest in the issue. – The CIP Coordinator will document any issues that call for a substantive legal decision, any request for enhancements that requires funding, and any proposed policy, rule or legislative changes to the Juvenile Policy Board or the DHHS Administrative Body that has authority over the issue. The Chair will include in the referral a summary of the issue and the problem it is intended to address, technical or business aspects relevant to the issue, and the initial impressions or recommendations of the Taskforce and any other identified administrative body that has an obvious interest in the issue.

VI. Reporting Responsibilities

On a quarterly basis the CIP Coordinator will report to the Juvenile Policy Board summarizing the activities and recommendations the Court Improvement Taskforce has made during the preceding three months.

Representative of DHHS will report activity of the Court Improvement Taskforce to appropriate DHHS administrative bodies.