

Minutes
Child Welfare Improvement Committee
Indiana Court Improvement Program
January 28, 2022 10:00 a.m. – noon
Remote via Zoom

Members Present:

- Tatiana Alvarez, Indiana Department of Child Services
- Mag. Sally Berish, Boone Circuit Court Mag. John Boyce, Marion Superior Court
- Mag. Ashley Colborn, St. Joseph Probate Court
- Chris Daley, Indiana Association of Resources and Child Advocacy
- Nafeesah Davis, Parent Advisor
- Hon. Christine Haseman, Monroe Circuit Court
- Hon. Jennifer Hubartt, Marion Superior Court
- Mag. Melinda Jackman-Hanlin, Putnam Circuit & Superior Courts
- Heather Hendley, Indiana Department of Child Services
- Hon. Stephen Koester, Madison Circuit Court 2
- Ashely Krumbach, Indiana Department of Child Services
- Alayna Leonard, Youth Advisor
- Teresa Lyles, Indiana Office of GAL/CASA, Indiana Office of Court Services
- Derrick Mason, Indiana Public Defender Commission
- Joel McGormley, Indiana Department of Child Services
- Karen Mikosz, Department of Social Services, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi
- Michael Moore, Indiana Public Defender Council
- Hon. Andrew Roesener, Johnson County Circuit Court
- Sonya Rush, Indiana Department of Child Services LaTrece Thompson, Indiana Department of Child Services

Staff Present:

- Senior Judge Nancy Gettinger
- Senior Judge Heather Mollo
- Angela Reid-Brown, Indiana Office of Court Services
- Colleen Saylor, Indiana Office of Court Services

1. **Approval of Minutes.** The minutes from the November 19, 2021, meeting was approved.

2. **Proposed Legislation – Restoration of Parental rights.** As a result of concerns expressed by judicial officers about the proposed legislation, a judicial workgroup will be convened to further review the matter. Sr. Judge Mollo will oversee the group, which will have judicial officers from CWIC, Indiana Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (ICJFCJ), and the Juvenile Justice Improvement Committee (JJIC) to work on a draft to present to CWIC and other stakeholders in hopes of having something agreed upon for the 2023 legislative session.

3. **CIP Strategic Plan Updates.** A copy of the strategic plan was sent out ahead of the meeting for review. Angela shared that the new five-year strategic plan began on 10/1/2021.
 - a Priority area #1-Quality Court Hearings. Angela indicated the plan is to target quality permanency hearings. While the state is doing well at holding the permanency hearings within the 1-year timeframe, the time to permanency overall is still rather lengthy and especially the time to adoption. Magistrate Hubartt shared there was a session at the 2021 Juvenile Judge Annual Meeting that focused on permanency but agreed the training efforts should be ongoing. Sr. Judge Gettinger pointed out that years ago they had a mock permanency hearing at a multidisciplinary conference to highlight what was working well and what could be improved.
 - b Priority area #2-Quality Legal Representation. Angela shared that Monroe County has implemented a system navigator pilot program. The pilot is heavily data-driven, and the work is beginning with a control group and an experimental group. Representatives from the Public Defender Commission (Commission) are working closely with the program. Vigo County is implementing a social worker program. Data and outcomes are being measured to determine effectiveness. The goal is to have two additional counties begin similar programs.
 - c Priority area #3-Child Welfare Mapping. Indiana is participating in the National Center for State Courts Upstream -Strengthening Children and Families through Prevention and Intervention
 - d Strategies National Consortium (formerly called Sequential Intercept Model for Child Welfare and
 - e Blueprint- Strengthening Children and Families through Prevention and Intervention Strategies Framework). The Framework will be piloted in LaPorte County from March 15-17, 2022, and in Tippecanoe County from May 10-12, 2022.
 - f Priority area # 4-CIP subgrants. Allen, Boone, Clark, Grant, Madison, and Vigo counties received awards for the 2021 grant cycle which started October 1, 2021, and ends September 30, 2022. The awards support various projects from mediation/facilitation, and multidisciplinary trainings to adoption day activities. Mike Moore inquired as to how other counties might get funding for mediation programs. Angela shared that the CIP grants are open to all courts that exercise juvenile court jurisdiction. The grants are start-up funding and phase out after four years.
4. **Other Matters.**
 - a Mike Moore shared that there is a lot of legislation this session dealing with children and family matters.
 - b Heather Hendley was introduced and welcomed by the group. She is the Assistant Deputy Director for Agency Transformation and Lean Principals with the Department of Child Services, she replaces Heather Kestian on the Committee.

2022 Meeting Dates

Date	Time	Platform
February 4, 2022 (joint meeting with JJIC)	12:00 Noon-2:00 pm	Teams
March 25, 2022	10:00 am-Noon	Zoom
May 6, 20200 (joint meeting with JJIC)	12:00 Noon-2:00 pm	Teams
May 27, 2022	10:00 am-Noon	Zoom
July 22, 2022	10:00 am-Noon	Zoom
August 5, 2022 (joint meeting with JJIC)	12:00 Noon-2:00 pm	Teams
September 23, 2022	10:00 am-Noon	Zoom

Minutes
Child Welfare Improvement Committee
Indiana Court Improvement Program
July 22, 2022, 10:00 a.m. – noon
Remote via Zoom

Members Present:

- Tatiana Alvarez, Indiana Department of Child Services
- Mag. Pauline Beeson, Marion Superior Court
- Mag. Sally Berish, Boone Circuit Court
- Mag. John Boyce, Marion Superior Court
- Mag. Ashley Colborn, St. Joseph Probate Court
- Chris Daley, Indiana Association of Resources and Child Advocacy
- Nafeesah Davis, Parent Advisor
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- Ashely Krumbach, Indiana Department of Child Services
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- Teresa Lyles, Indiana Office of GAL/CASA, Indiana Office of Court Services
- Derrick Mason, Indiana Public Defender Commission
- Joel McGormley, Indiana Department of Child Services
- Karen Mikosz, Department of Social Services, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi
- Michael Moore, Indiana Public Defender Council
- Hon. Lynn Murray, Howard Circuit Court
- Sonya Rush, Indiana Department of Child Services
- LaTrece Thompson, Indiana Department of Child Services

Staff Present:

- Senior Judge Nancy Gettinger
- Senior Judge Heather Mollo
- Angela Reid-Brown, Indiana Office of Court Services
- Leslie Dunn, Indiana Office of Court Services
- Colleen Saylor, Indiana Office of Court Services

Guests: Angela Smith-Grossman, Indiana Department of Child Services

1. **Welcome and Introductions.** Magistrate Hubartt welcomed attendees and introduced new members.
2. **Approval of Minutes.** The minutes from January 28, 2022, meeting were approved.
3. **Adoption Subsidy Negotiations.** Angela Smith-Grossman shared that DCS held a Value Stream Analysis (VSA) on adoption subsidies in April 2022. The VSA included a mapping of the current subsidy negotiation process which found numerous duplicative or unnecessary steps.

Since the VSA, DCS has made internal changes to the process; eliminating approximately twenty-seven steps and a few forms. Specially trained adoption consultants will coordinate subsidy negotiations and are available upon request to attend court hearings. Angela will supply the contact information for the adoption consultants. Judicial officers requested an updated process flow chart and invited DCS to share any suggestions on how judges can help aid the process.

4. **Proposed Legislation – Restoration of Parental rights.** The Committee agreed any proposed legislation should be held until the 2024 Legislative session.

5. **Public Defender Commission Update.** Derrick Mason reported the Public Defender Commission (Commission) set aside a part of the \$2 million dollars for at-risk youth and families funding to launch a system navigator program. System navigators serve as liaisons between the public defender and client and between the client and DCS in CHINS cases. The Commission is partnering with Monroe County to pilot the system navigator program. The two-year pilot uses a blind assignment process that places families into either a control group or an experimental group. There are 122 clients currently assigned to the program with seventy-two in the experimental group (42 of which have been assigned a system navigator) and fifty in the control group (no system navigator). Through the study, the Commission hopes to figure out the types of cases that most benefit from having system navigators which would allow jurisdictions to focus efforts and funding where it will be most helpful.

Vigo County received an At-Risk Youth and Families grant to supply parent advocates or licensed clinical social workers (LCSW) in CHINS cases. The program currently has eighty-seven clients with forty in the experimental group and forty-seven in the control group. All forty of the clients in the experimental group are working with either a parent advocate, an LCSW, or both. The Commission is continuing to accept applications for At-Risk Youth and Family funding.

6. **Child Welfare Data.** Colleen Saylor shared updates to the Indiana Child Welfare Performance Measures Dashboard (Dashboard). The Dashboard is now being updated quarterly and includes data from 2018 to the most current quarterly data. Two other pages have been added which include focused visualizations; one for permanency and one which supplies a county snapshot that clearly depicts most measures from 2018 to the most current quarterly data. These enhancements allow courts to check progress and show trends. Colleen displayed data dashboards for Ohio and New Jersey, both of which include child welfare agency data. The Court Improvement Program would like to collaborate with DCS to integrate child welfare data into the Indiana Child Welfare Performance Measures Dashboard. The Committee discussed whether CIP could report demographic data. The current Dashboard uses data from Odyssey and Quest and demographic data are not mandatory fields in those systems.

7. **Child and Family Service Review (CFSR).** Angela Reid-Brown shared that the kickoff for the Indiana CFSR is scheduled for this fall with case reviews starting in the spring of 2023. Angela may reach out to Committee members to ask for their participation in the process.

2022 Meeting Dates

September 23, 2022,

10:00 am-Noon

Zoom

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Indiana Court Improvement Program
September 23, 2022 10:00 a.m. – noon
Remote via Zoom

Members Present:

- Tatiana Alvarez, Indiana Department of Child Services
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Staff Present:

- Senior Judge Nancy Gettinger
- Senior Judge Heather Mollo
- Angela Reid-Brown, Indiana Office of Court Services
- Leslie Dunn, Indiana Office of Court Services
- Colleen Saylor, Indiana Office of Court Services

Guests: Bridget Koza and Charlene Blackmore, Administration for Children & Families, Children's Bureau

8. **Welcome and Introductions.** Magistrate Hubartt welcomed attendees
9. **Approval of Minutes.** The minutes from July 22, 2022, meeting were approved.
10. **Indiana Child and Family Service Review (CFSR).** Charlene Blackmore and Bridget Koza, Administration for Children & Families, Children's Bureau shared an overview of the upcoming CFSR.

The following timeframe was presented:

- i. Currently – CFSR Round 4 Planning & Preparation
- ii. October 1, 2022 – Data profile transmittal
- iii. February 1, 2023 – Statewide assessment submitted
- iv. April 1 – September 30, 2023 Onsite review phase
- v. Within 30 days of review completion – Final report issued
- vi. Within 90 days of final report – Program Improvement Plan (PIP) submitted
- vii. 2 years from PIP approval – PIP implementation ends
- viii. 3.5 years from PIP approval – Post-PIP evaluation period ends

Charlene and Bridgette shared the differences between the previous federally led review and the anticipated state led review for this CFSR round. Indiana anticipates being given approval for the CFSR to be state led and this will allow the state to choose the sample across the state rather than the federal review which looks at just three sites. The Measuring and Sampling Committee (MASC) should indicate if Indiana was approved to be state led sometime next week. Charlene expressed confidence that the process would run smoothly for Indiana based on Angela Reid-Brown's previous performance as the State Legal and Judicial Specialist for the project and early completion of that Program Improvement Plan (PIP). Bridgette shared the Children's Bureau vision for legal and judicial systems engagement in the CFSR. Angela and Colleen will be participating in the review as well as Mike Moore and Julia Stevens. Magistrate Hubartt encouraged anyone else interested to volunteer. The plan at this time is for the interviews to be held virtually beginning April 1, 2023 with an anticipated completion date of September 30, 2023. Members had discussion on whether the sample would be data driven; it will be a blind random sample. Stakeholders were advised that if they are aware of a jurisdiction that appears to be struggling with timeliness to reach out to Angela as IOCS can work with them individually. Kim Nightengale shared that DCS litigation has creating a data committee to review outcomes and welcome any input or suggestions. They provided reference materials for further review:

[Fact Sheet for Legal and Judicial Communities](#)
[Round 3 Report for Legal and Judicial Communities](#)
[Spotlight Series for Legal & Judicial Communities](#)

11. **Improving Permanency Outcomes.** Magistrate Hubartt reviewed items from the CIP strategic plan and reminded members of priority areas. Quality court hearings are one item of focus and CWIC had identified permanency hearings as a specific area to target. Members were reminded that Chief Justice Rush has tasked CWIC with reviewing the data on permanency in Indiana and drafting recommendations to reduce time to permanency, specifically time to adoption.
12. **CIP Quality Hearing Project.** Angela shared the first step will be to gather baseline data on what is happening in hearings currently across the state. Members shared various practices in different jurisdictions. Magistrate Hubartt suggested the creation of a benchcard or practice tips as potential projects to address identified areas for improvement.
13. **Indiana Court Performance Measures.** Colleen Saylor shared data from the FFY 2021 report as well as FFY 2022 quarters 1- 3. She highlighted the data showing 47% of Indiana

children who entered foster care in 2019 reached legal permanency within 12 months in contrast to 37% nationally. The percentage of children who re-enter foster care within twelve months of their discharge when permanency (excluding adoption) was achieved within twelve months is 4.9% which is significantly better than the national rate of 8/1%. Indiana’s time to permanency for adoption continues to be a concern with cases taking a median of 1,112 days (36.5 months) for FFY 2021; 52.3% higher than the national standard of 730 days (24 months).

14. **Brainstorming.** Members discussed various practices which may be contributing to the delays in permanency and potential areas to consider for improvement.

- Automatically waiving timeframes to set cases for mediation
- Authority to set hearings beyond the 120 days for good cause
- Keeping cases open longer after reunification to see how things are going
- Delays in filing of guardianship cases; some jurisdictions do not have an agency to file these, may appoint a PD or relative is left to navigate the process
- Guardianship being used to negotiate TPR filing
- Who is initiating conversation regarding guardianship and can those discussions take place earlier in the case
- Institutional shift to be more accepting of guardianship as a permanency outcome
- Not all attorneys that handle CHINS cases also handle the TPR case
- Identifying potential guardians early on and starting the background check process
- Some CASA programs are able to provide funds to pay for an attorney to file and expedite the guardianship process
- Train caseworkers to have conversations early in the case balancing support for reunification with planning for alternatives if things don’t go well – “What could go wrong?”
- Promote Kinship Navigator program
- Start planning for multiple outcomes on day one of removal
- Look at what is happening in the time from the 6 month review to the 15 out of 18 month marker

Magistrate Hubartt asked members to meet with their stakeholders between now and the next CWIC meeting in January to ask what makes a quality permanency hearing. Focus on quality and timeliness. Not just permanency hearings but also dispositional hearings.

15. **Other Matters.** Angela reminded members that Chief Justice Rush has asked CWIC to consider what else can be done with the court performance measures data. Are there other ways to share or promote it to get stakeholders to analyze their data and identify areas for improvement. Magistrate Hubartt suggested regional stakeholder meetings be held and multidisciplinary reviews of the data. Consider what is happening in practice that may be impacting the data.

Future Meeting Dates

January 27, 2023	10:00 am-Noon	Zoom
March 24, 2023	10:00 am-Noon	Zoom
May 26, 2023	10:00 am-Noon	Zoom

July 28, 2023
September 22, 2023

10:00 am-Noon
10:00 am-Noon

Zoom
Zoom