Meaningful and Ongoing Engagement of Tribes and State Courts in Child Protection

By Alicia K. Davis and Gina Jackson

Also:

Reforming Juvenile Justice: A Developmental Approach
By Melissa Sickmund, Ph.D.

Seven (Easy) Steps to Creating a Transition Policy for Juvenile Drug Court Team Members
By Wendy L. Schiller

One Family, One Judge: Unlocking the Ancient Mystery of How to Build an Evidence Base in Juvenile Dependency Courts
By Alicia Summers, Ph.D.
RESEARCH CONFIRMS

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The Mission of the NCJFCJ is “to provide all judges, courts, and related agencies involved with juvenile, family, and domestic violence cases with the knowledge and skills to improve the lives of the families and children who seek justice.”

Among the goals that the NCJFCJ has to fulfill this Mission are:

- Improving the standards, practices, and effectiveness of the nation’s family and juvenile courts; and
- Contributing to the development of national policy, standards, and procedures regarding children and families.

Historically, one of the ways that the NCJFCJ has pursued these goals is through resolutions and policy statements, most of which can be found on the NCJFCJ website, www.NCJFCJ.org. Some of the many resolutions adopted by the NCJFCJ include:

- Support for the Interstate Compact on Placement of Children (ICPC) and resolutions advocating specific improvements to ICPC to make it a more timely process;
- Support for presumptively open Dependency Court hearings;
- Support for timely relative placements and reasonably diligent searches in furtherance of those placements;
- Support for judicial promotion of positive educational outcomes for foster children;
- Support for the encouragement of judicial leadership within the community to help achieve better outcomes for at-risk children and families;
- Support for reauthorizing of federal legislation such as the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act and the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act;
- Support for the NCJFCJ and its membership to take action to reduce the disproportionate representation of minority children in the child welfare system;
- Support for child welfare finance reform articulated in the NCJFCJ 2011 child welfare finance reform policy statement;
- Support for the NCJFCJ policy statement encouraging the presence of children at court hearings and other proceedings when important decisions about their lives are made;
- Support for juvenile courts partnering with schools to keep youth in school and out of court as much as possible.

This list is only a partial list of the subjects in which the NCJFCJ has contributed to the development of policies, standards, and procedures regarding children and families. This year, as I am privileged to serve as President of the NCJFCJ, promises to be no different.

One of the areas we will be addressing is psychotropic medications. To that end, I have created a Psychotropic Medication Committee. It is being chaired by Judge John Hathaway from Texas with Judge Amy Pellman from California as vice chair. We have great NCJFCJ staff support from Dr. Shawn Marsh.

The purpose of the committee is to develop and recommend standards for all judges who deal with youth receiving psychotropic medications and to develop training for judges who deal with issues related to psychotropic medications. I am from California, a state where judges are required to approve the administration of psychotropic medications. While this same requirement does not exist in many states, it is my position that all judges who have children and youth on their dockets need to be involved in the process through our oversight responsibility. We should know when and why psychotropic medications are being prescribed along with what other treatments are being considered and being utilized. We should know how the medications are working, or not working. We should ensure that procedures are in place so that the medication regimen is not disrupted when youth move, an all too frequent occurrence in our system. We should also ensure that youth who age up and out are prepared to make decisions for themselves regarding the use of medications. These are some of the issues the committee will be addressing in a comprehensive way.

Among the issues being considered by our Juvenile Law Committee, whose chair is Judge Ellen White from Virginia and vice chair is Judge Tony Capizzi from Ohio, is sex trafficking of minors. This committee is currently working on a resolution which is a detailed call for action for judges, the NCJFCJ, and others. Our organization is already working to develop actions to deal with this important, complex, and troubling issue. In addition, we have received funding through a cooperative agreement with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in this regard. I have also been invited to attend a roundtable convened by the Administration for Children and Families in conjunction with the White House to discuss this issue. I will be reporting on the results of that in our next issue.

Another topic of current interest and importance that the NCJFCJ is weighing in on is military families. We know that families are impacted by military service in matters involving divorce, custody, visitation, child support, child safety and well-being, family and domestic violence, substance abuse, juvenile and family law, and more. An NCJFCJ resolution in 2011 committed our organization to addressing these issues through judicial education and collaborations with other stakeholders. We have an active Military Committee now chaired by Judge Bobbe Bridge (Ret.) from Washington with Judge Warner Kennon of Georgia as vice chair. Planning is currently under way for a summit on military issues.

As you can see, we are part of a vibrant, vital organization that continues to address important issues impacting children and families in a significant way. We are thankful for our approximately 2,000 members, many of whom take an active part in how the NCJFCJ helps judges and others with the critical work they do on behalf of children and families. And we can use more help. Regardless, as I wrote in our last issue of TODAY, “we’ve made the world a better place and will continue to do so.”

Best Regards,

Judge Michael Nash
Los Angeles, California
The National Academy of Sciences – Reforming Juvenile Justice: A Developmental Approach

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• Register for Conferences
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The New Year came speeding in—why does it always do that? It seems like only last week 2012 had arrived, and the NCJFCJ was embarking on an exciting new year. Well, 2012 has come to a close—and as it turns out, it was indeed an exciting year.

We trained more than 14,000 judges, court administrators, and support personnel on critical issues such as protecting children in child custody cases, substance abuse, adolescent brain development, the impact of school zero-tolerance policies on children, trauma and its impact on military families, and domestic violence to name just a few.

Our Project ONE initiative took center stage as we developed guiding principles and launched demonstration sites. We are on track with Project ONE to provide judges with guidance for supporting the needs of families and children no matter which jurisdictional “door” of the courthouse—family law, child welfare, domestic violence, or juvenile justice—they enter.

We were pleased to see the United States Supreme Court’s ruling in Miller v. Alabama that the Eighth Amendment forbids life without the possibility of parole for juvenile homicide offenders, and equally pleased they cited several publications from our National Center for Juvenile Justice research division in the decision.

We highlighted all the phenomenal, and in many cases, life-changing work the NCJFCJ has accomplished as we celebrated our organization’s 75th year. In so doing, we renewed our commitment to keep our mission front and center for a society in which every family and child has access to fair, equal, effective, and timely justice.

We continue to strengthen the judicial voice in Washington, D.C. Vice President Joe Biden convened over 150 leading national advocates to listen to six distinguished panelists which included one of our esteemed judges from Arizona. Our leadership provided critical information at a briefing to the U.S. House of Representatives on the importance of good outcomes for abused children. We’ve been a strong voice for the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act, and involved in the White House Initiative to combat human trafficking. We will continue to be at the forefront of federal policy and legislation impacting the juvenile and family court systems.

If all of this weren’t significant in its own right, we launched a new Development Department and hired Director Leslie Farias to develop major gifting and planned giving initiatives. Donor investments such as these can further empower our organization and bring it to new heights. In addition, Leslie’s entrepreneurial perspective is bringing new ways to create revenue streams to further assist with much needed operations funding.

To carry out these efforts, our collaboration—yours and the NCJFCJ—will be essential to building long-term investment partnerships and relationships. Therefore, your commitment to financially support our programs and operations will be instrumental to the success of our shared mission. Knowing how much you all care about the positive judicial outcomes for the men, women, and children who appear daily in our nation’s courts, I urge you to connect us to like-minded philanthropists as well as start this new year with your own generous investment.

We have been very busy this past year, and no doubt, this is why it must seem that only last week 2012 was on my doorstep. I feel better now.

My Best,

Mari Kay Bickett, JD
Chief Executive Officer

NOTES FROM THE CEO
Judge Abby Abinanti Honored at California’s 45th Annual Native American Day

Tribal Court Judge and NCJFCJ member Abby Abinanti was honored at the 45th Annual Native American Day celebration hosted by the State Tribal Liaisons of California and California Indian Heritage Center Foundation. Judge Abinanti was recognized for her many years of judicial service to the Native American community and her commitment to the development of tribal courts in California.

Native American Day has been celebrated for the past 45 years on the State Capitol grounds to honor the valuable historical and cultural contributions of Native Americans. This year’s theme, “Honoring Native American Women in Leadership” was chosen to honor Native American women with outstanding commitment and leadership to benefit Native American communities and future generations.

Judge Michael Anderegg Receives Adoption Award

Marquette County Probate Court Judge Michael Anderegg, former NCJFCJ Board of Trustees member, was one of just 113 people in the country to receive the Angels in Adoption award this year. The award, given out since 1999, is intended to honor people who have done exceptional work as adoption champions and who have made a lasting impact on the lives of children.

Judge Anderegg has served as president of the Michigan Probate Judges Association and the Upper Peninsula Probate Judges Association and in 2004 received the President’s Award for Meritorious Service to the NCJFCJ. He has worked as an adoption advocate on both a national and local level.

Judge Kim Berkeley Clark Receives 2012 Athena Award

Judge Kim Berkeley Clark, Family Division, Fifth Judicial District of Pennsylvania, has been named the winner of the 2012 Athena Awards. Judge Clark started as an assistant district attorney and became a deputy district attorney before being named to the Court of Common Pleas in 1999. She was elected to two 10-year terms later that year and in 2009. She was the first African-American administrative judge in Allegheny County. Judge Clark serves as the Lead Judge for the NCJFCJ’s Dependency Model Court. Her commitment to improving practice and her dynamic personality and boundless enthusiasm have brought together disparate groups to solve intractable problems.

Past NCJFCJ President Judge Thomas E. Hornsby (Ret.) Granted Emeritus Professor of Law

Congratulations to NCJFCJ Past President (1996-1997) Judge Thomas E. Hornsby. He was granted Emeritus Professor of Law status at Florida Coastal School of Law in Jacksonville, Florida in 2011, and was appointed to the University of North Florida College of Arts and Sciences’ Dean’s Leadership Council in 2012.

Judge Marshall Murray named ‘Jurist of the Year’

The Justinian Society of Lawyers named Milwaukee County Circuit Court Judge Marshall B. Murray its Jurist of the Year at the Nineteenth Annual Columbus Day Awards Banquet in Milwaukee. The society, founded in 1921, is affiliated with the National Italian American Bar
Association and is one of the largest ethnic bar associations in the country. The organization sponsors a continuing legal education program and lawyer referral program, and participates in civic and community affairs to promote the ongoing respect for the legal system. Judge Murray has served on the NCJFCJ’s Board of Trustees and various committees and serves as faculty.

**Judge John Specia, Jr., Named Department of Family and Protective Services Commissioner**

Senior District Judge John J. Specia, Jr., a founding member and jurist in residence for the Supreme Court Children’s Commission of Texas, has been named the next commissioner of the Department of Family and Protective Services. Judge Specia has extensive experience in policy issues involving children and families. He established the Bexar County Children’s Court with specialized services for children and the Family Drug Treatment Court, which has become a model for the state. Judge Specia served as vice-chair of the Supreme Court’s Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families and chair of the Supreme Court Task Force on Foster Care. He is among the state’s first child welfare attorneys, serving as a regional attorney for the former Texas Department of Human Services from 1980-1985.

In 2012, Judge Specia was honored with the Infant Mental Health Advocacy Award, and he received the 2011 Lone Star Award for his work in substance abuse prevention and treatment. He is a past recipient of the Dale Wood Award for outstanding protection of children by the judiciary and was named “Judge of the Year” by Texas CASA in 1998. Judge Specia has served on the NCJFCJ’s Board of Trustees.

**Harbor Beach Names Park in Honor of Judge James H. Lincoln**

The former Bathing Beach Park and adjacent 6.85 acres in Harbor Beach, Michigan was officially renamed The James H. Lincoln Memorial Park in honor of Judge Lincoln. At the dedication, his wife of 70 years, Kim Lincoln, expressed that this honor would be the highlight of her husband’s life.

Harbor Beach Mayor Gary Booms told the crowd that the park was a fitting memorial, as Judge Lincoln was dedicated to helping children throughout his career presiding over an estimated 30,000 adoptions as the Wayne County Probate Judge.

Completion date is set for Memorial Day Weekend 2013. The Judge James H. Lincoln Memorial Park will officially open at that time with a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Judge Lincoln passed away at his home on Lake Huron in Harbor Beach on July 23, 2011, at the age of 94. He served as NCJFCJ President in 1971-1972.

**IN MEMORIAM**

**Edward Charles Theobald**

Former NCJFCJ member Judge Edward Charles Theobald passed away on November 9, 2012. Ed was born May 26, 1932 to Mary Adams Theobald (Selby) and Edward Carlson Theobald in Vincennes, Indiana. A life-long resident of Vincennes, Ed was an active civic leader. He graduated from Lincoln High School and received his BS in Accounting and JD from Indiana University. He was a member of Phi Kappa Psi. He was Vice President and Trust Officer with Security Bank and Trust Co. before attending law school.

Ed entered public service as Knox County Prosecutor and was Superior Court Judge for more than 20 years. His passion and focus was helping youth. He founded Children and Family Services, Inc. established the Southwest Indiana Regional Youth Village and was very active in the Indiana Judicial Conference serving many years on the Juvenile Justice Improvement Committee and on the Indiana Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. He brought the national Court Appointed Special Advocate Program to Indiana and was President and Director of the Knox County Youth Development Commission. He organized a sobering mock accident to encourage high school youth to be safe on Prom Night, which reenactment is repeated annually. He was thrilled to be an advisor to PAWS.

Ed was a devoted husband and father and was adored by his grandchildren. He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Helen (Pielemeier) Theobald, brother Thomas (Mary) Theobald, sons Edward (Elizabeth) Theobald III and Thomas Theobald, daughters Elizabeth (Tom) Young-Ford and Amy (Sean) Burke, and grandchildren Will, Pat and Emily Young, Ed, Nina and Jack Theobald and Annie and Olivia Theobald. Ed’s daughter, Anne Theobald predeceased him.

Reprinted from the The Indianapolis Star on November 11, 2012

**SUBMIT MEMBER NEWS TO:**

NCJFCJ
Megan Gibson, mgibson@ncjfcj.org
P.O. Box 8970, Reno, NV 89507
As the nation’s oldest judicial membership organization, NCJFCJ members lead the development and implementation of policy and practice for our nation’s children and families seeking justice.

Not only does membership provide a direct link to key stakeholders and access to a number of resources, but NCJFCJ members are part of a community of colleagues working toward the common goal of giving every family and child in the judicial system access to fair, equal, effective, and timely justice.

This year, look for new training and educational opportunities, enhanced technical assistance, and additional resources to assist judges and court personnel in their everyday work.

Become a member today, and together, we can lead the change in our communities and across the nation.

Visit www.NCJFCJ.org for more information or call (775) 784-6012.
The NCJFCJ Nominating Committee is accepting nominations of active judicial members for eight (8) open positions on the Board of Trustees. Terms are three (3) years. To submit your nomination or to nominate a fellow member, please forward a letter of intent or nomination to the Nominating Committee Chair as outlined below, no later than Monday, April 15, 2013. Please include a current resume’ or curriculum vitae.

Pursuant to the NCJFCJ Bylaws, each person seeking nomination for the office of Trustee must possess the following minimum qualifications at the time of the election:

- Have been an active judicial member in good standing of the NCJFCJ for at least three (3) years;
- Be sitting as a judicial officer at the time of application for his or her first term as Trustee;
- Have previously attended an Annual Conference as a registered, active member within the last three (3) years;
- Have submitted a completed application for nomination ninety (90) days prior to the commencement of the conference, as prescribed by the Nominating Committee;
- Make a commitment to comply with the individual Responsibilities of a Trustee as outlined in the NCJFCJ Bylaws, Article III(B); and
- Agree to follow the NCJFCJ’s Standards of Conduct.

The Nominating Committee will consider additional factors, including but not limited to: participation on committees; drafting of articles or publications; serving as faculty at conferences or training programs; participation on other relevant advisory groups; financial support of the organization. Members seeking nomination for a first term as Trustee must provide the names of two active members as references, and each eligible candidate for first or second term must be interviewed by the Nominating Committee.

Additional information regarding the Nominating Committee, nominations process, expectations of Trustees, and application information can be found at http://www.ncjfcj.org/boardnominations. The NCJFCJ Bylaws and Standards of Conduct can be found at http://www.ncjfcj.org/about/ncjfcj.

Upon receipt of applications, eligibility will be confirmed and interviews set. Applicants must plan to be in Seattle, Washington, to meet with the Nominations Committee in conjunction with the NCJFCJ 76th Annual Conference, on Sunday, July 14, 2013. Nominations should be sent to:

Hon. Janice Rosa  
NCJFCJ Nominating Committee Chair  
c/o Diedra Thiesse, Executive Assistant  
P.O. Box 8970  
Reno, NV 89507  
or FAX to 775-784-1084

If you have any questions about the nominations process, please contact Diedra Thiesse at dthiesse@ncjfcj.org.
The National Academy of Sciences recently released Reforming Juvenile Justice: A Developmental Approach. The preface begins —

“Recent findings from research on adolescent development, and particularly increasing knowledge about the adolescent brain, have led to deep and growing concerns about the treatment of juveniles in the nation’s justice system. There is a fundamental disconnect between what is now known about the characteristic features of adolescents and the apparent assumptions of that system. One reflection of that disconnect is a recent series of decisions from the United States Supreme Court forbidding the most severe penalties for adolescent offenders, especially the death penalty. There have also been a wide range of reforms in the administration of juvenile justice over the past 15 years, some of which reflect the emerging knowledge about adolescents and some of which do not.”

The Committee on Assessing Juvenile Justice Reform (whose members included NCJFCJ past president Judge Ernestine Gray) was asked to review reforms over the past 15 years in light of research knowledge about adolescent development. Their premise was that the juvenile justice system should be informed by what is known about adolescent development, and if it were, better outcomes would result. If not, “the outcome is likely to be negative interactions between youth and justice system officials, increased disrespect for the law and legal authority, and the reinforcement of a deviant identity and social disaffection.” The report makes the case that a harsh system of sanctioning juvenile offenders can make things worse, but a system based on science and evidence about what works can make a positive difference in the lives of youth who most need structure and services that the juvenile justice system can provide.

The report summarizes research on adolescence, pointing out three important ways adolescents differ from adults:
- They are less able to regulate their behavior in emotionally charged situations.
- They are more sensitive to external influences such as peer pressure and immediate rewards.
- They show less ability to make judgments and make decisions that require future orientation.

The report discusses the existing juvenile justice system and identifies three ways that residential placement interferes with adolescents’ healthy development:
- Disrupting involvement of a caring/concerned parent or parent figure with the adolescent.
- Limiting adolescents’ opportunities to associate with positive peers.
- Removing adolescents from activities that require autonomous decision making and critical thinking, like school and extracurricular activities.

The committee argues for a developmental approach to juvenile justice that holds youth accountable, prevents subsequent offending, and treats youth fairly. They made several recommendations for state and tribal governments including:
- They should establish bipartisan multi-stakeholder task forces or commissions, under the auspices of the governor, the legislature, or the highest state court, to undertake a thorough and transparent assessment of their juvenile justice systems.
- They should align their laws, policies, and practices with evolving knowledge about adolescent development and evidence-based programs.
- They should intensify efforts to identify and eliminate policies that tend to disadvantage minorities, to publicly report on the scope of the problem, and to evaluate programs aimed at reducing disparities.

Recommendations aimed toward federal policymakers include:
- Restore the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s (OJJDP) capacity to carry out its core mission through reauthorization, appropriations, and funding flexibility.
- Define status offenders to include offenses such as possession of alcohol or tobacco that apply only to youth younger than 21.
- Remove all exceptions to the detention of youth who commit offenses that would not be punishable by confinement if committed by an adult. Youth should not be detained for truancy or running away.
- Modify the definition of “adult inmate” to give states flexibility to keep youth in juvenile facilities until they reach the age of extended juvenile court jurisdiction.
- Expand the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act protections to all youth under pretrial detention, whether they are charged in juvenile or criminal court.

Recommendations were also made regarding OJJDP and other federal research agencies and their support of research on adolescent development. In addition, a recommendation was made that federal and private statistical agencies develop a data improvement program on juvenile offending and juvenile justice system processing that provides greater insight into state and local variations.

The report cites several NCJFCJ publications and publications authored by the National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ) staff. NCJJ will continue to help OJJDP make juvenile justice statistical information available to the public through the Statistical Briefing Book (http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/default.asp) and various publications and hopes to be able to continue to work with OJJDP to improve juvenile justice data throughout the country. If your jurisdiction has data improvement plans, please feel free to contact us.

For more information about the report, visit http://www.nap.edu.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Melissa Sickmund, Ph.D., Director, National Center for Juvenile Justice, Pittsburgh, PA
YLS/CMI 2.0


The Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory 2.0 (YLS/CMI™ 2.0) is a gender- and culturally-informed, strength focused risk/needs tool that reliably and accurately classifies and predicts re-offending within male and female juvenile populations.

Created for both genders, the YLS/CMI 2.0 includes new features to address the needs of a growing adolescent offender population:

- Expanded age range - 12 to 18 years
- Large U.S. sample of over 15,000 juveniles
- Significant minority representation in normative sample
- U.S. norms by gender and setting
- Guidelines that instruct users to consider gender-specific factors, as well as, the importance of minor risk/need factors and non-criminogenic needs
- Assessment items that address gender-informed responsivity factors - such as pregnancy/motherhood issues and physical/sexual victimization issues
- Assessment items that address culturally-informed responsivity factors

In addition, the YLS/CMI 2.0 provides an opportunity for users to evaluate positive offender attributes so that offender strengths may be highlighted and built upon in service delivery.

For more information on the YLS/CMI 2.0 and the Level of Service/Risk, Need and Responsivity (LS/RNR™) Contact client services, at 1-800-456-3003.

www.mhs.com/YLSCMI2
Civil Protection Orders Training

In mid-September, the NCJFCJ convened two days of multi-disciplinary trainings in Western Oregon on its Civil Protection Orders: A Guide for Improving Practice (CPO Guide). These collaborative trainings were made possible because of the judicial leadership of NCJFCJ Board Member Judge Katherine Tennyson. The trainings were designed with stakeholders from Oregon’s tri-county area, including Portland, to improve the protection order process through multi-disciplinary collaboration. They were developed around the needs of the three jurisdictions that participated in the trainings. Judge Sue Carbon, past NCJFCJ President and former director of the Office on Violence Against Women, served as a key faculty member, along with NCJFCJ member Judge Berryl Anderson, who also co-chairs the CPO Guide Implementation Committee.

The format of the day-long trainings intentionally provided opportunities for inter-disciplinary dialogue. Participants included judges, law enforcement officers, civil attorneys, prosecutors, advocates, court staff, and probation and parole officers. Many participants agreed that the training session increased their understanding of the differing roles played by the system’s various stakeholders. The sessions also prompted interest in further multi-disciplinary training and dialogue to enhance awareness of gaps and opportunities for increased collaboration.

Topics covered during the two trainings included assessing danger and lethality and examining best practices for enforcement of civil protection orders. Participants learned to better identify and apply dangerousness/risk assessment in domestic violence cases, and to recognize and respond to changes in dangerousness/risk as the victim navigates the civil justice system. Attendees also addressed the importance of ensuring access to the civil justice system by enhancing their cultural awareness. Additionally, participants learned the value of increased communication between different professionals involved in the protection order process.

The NCJFCJ looks forward to working further with stakeholders in the tri-county area around Portland who plan to continue a multi-disciplinary approach to improving the protection order process in their jurisdictions.

Court Training and Improvement Program

On September 11 and 12, 2012, the NCJFCJ provided a two-day, multi-disciplinary educational program in Detroit for Wayne County, Michigan judges, attorneys, and custody evaluators. In 2010, Wayne County received a Court Training and Improvement Program grant from the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women (OVW). This grant allowed Wayne County to invite the NCJFCJ to their jurisdiction to provide education on domestic violence in court cases. Among the faculty were NCJFCJ members Judge Andrew Crecca and Court of Appeals Justice Amy Ronayne Krause.

Twenty-two judges and referees trained together on the first day while 28 court attorneys and 12 custody evaluators were trained simultaneously. On the second day, both groups came together. All participants increased their knowledge of the impact of domestic violence and left with a better understanding of how domestic violence dynamics affect the decision-making and courtroom appearance of victims and perpetrators.

Topics provided the context in which the violence and controlling behavior occurred and the impact of domestic violence on children.
Participants learned about custody in domestic violence cases and how the lethality risk to the victim drives the relief and safety provisions granted to the victim across all court systems. On the second day, participants focused on the protection order system. This included danger and lethality, promoting safety, and enforcing protection orders.

The Court Training and Improvement Program provides money to train local judges. Grantees can use these training dollars either to send their judges to the National Judicial Institute on Domestic Violence (NJIDV) Enhancing Judicial Skills in Domestic Violence Workshop or have the NCJFCJ provide training in their community. The NCJFCJ serves as OVW’s comprehensive judicial technical assistance provider, supporting training and technical assistance for state, local, tribal, and territorial judges. For more information about training, please contact Steve Aycock at (775) 784-4463 or steven_aycock@ncjfcj.org, or go to www.NJIDV.org.

Child Abuse and Neglect Institute

On September 10-13, 2012, the New York State Child Welfare Court Improvement Project, in partnership with the NCJFCJ, hosted its 2nd New York Child Abuse and Neglect Institute at the New York State Judicial Institute at Pace Law School. Serving as faculty, Judge Michael Key, Judge Sharon Townsend, and Judge Edwina Richardson-Mendelson provided training to 30 judges and court attorney referees from New York and Vermont. The judicial officers participated in sessions that covered federal and state child welfare legislation (including the Indian Child Welfare Act), judicial ethics and leadership, hearing practice, child development, substance abuse, and cutting-edge court improvement based upon the RESOURCE GUIDELINES: Improving Court Practice in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases. Highlights included the opportunity to work collaboratively through a case scenario, and a panel discussion with reunified parents who shared stories about their struggle and triumph upon reunification with their children while offering candid advice about how the court and child welfare agency can improve outcomes for families and children.

Enhancing a Coordinated Response to Domestic Violence in a Court Setting

On September 24, 2012, the NCJFCJ held an intensive, one-day conference in Thurston County, Washington. Thurston County is an Office on Violence Against Women Court Training and Improvements Program (Courts Program) grantee. As a technical assistance provider for the Courts Program, the NCJFCJ worked with Thurston County to design a multi-disciplinary conference that would bring together integral stakeholders from Washington courts with the goal of improving response to domestic violence in a court setting.

The 160 participants trained included judicial officers, court staff, attorneys, guardians ad litem, custody investigators, and Court Appointed Special Advocates. During the morning session, participants worked together to evaluate the impact of violence on adult and child victims and to learn about perpetrator behavior. Following the morning session, participants had the opportunity to improve their understanding of one another’s roles and responsibilities across professions in order to foster a better coordinated response to domestic violence cases. Finally, participants spent the afternoon in one of four profession-specific groups where they were able to delve deeper into how the morning session applied to their personal work as practitioners.

The NCJFCJ continues to work with Thurston County to provide technical assistance on custody and protection orders. For more information on how the NCJFCJ can provide you with training or technical assistance, contact Eryn Branch at ebranch@ncjfcj.org or at (775) 784-4435.

Safety Considerations in Rural Courts: A Program for Judges

Forty-four judicial officers representing 21 of Kansas’ 31 judicial districts convened in Salina, Kansas in October to attend the NCJFCJ’s “Safety Considerations in Rural Courts: A Program for Judges.” Despite popular notions that domestic violence is an urban problem, recent data demonstrates that it is also a significant problem for rural Americans, with specific challenges for judicial officers.

Nearly half of Kansas’ population (over one million people) lives in rural areas of the state. The Kansas Office of Judicial Administration recognized the unique challenges judges faced when presented with domestic violence cases, and reached out for training and technical assistance from the NCJFCJ. Expert faculty, including NCJFCJ member Judge Victor Reyes, Judge-in-Residence Steve Aycock (Ret.), Joyce Yedlosky, and Jennifer Arsenian, JD, presented a dynamic one-day training, structured around exercises and discussions specific to the challenges of small, rural communities.

The training helped judges identify barriers that domestic violence victims encounter while navigating the legal system in rural communities, identify and coordinate services for victims in rural communities, and assess policies and practices that may improve or impair a victim’s access to justice in court. At the close of the training, judges felt that their ability to identify and address the unique barriers and challenges faced by domestic violence victims in rural communities improved vastly.

Approximately 20 percent of our nation’s population lives in rural parts of America. This is an often forgotten group in relation to the particular challenges presented by victims of domestic violence.
UPCOMING CONFERENCES AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

Judicial Institute: Family Law
February 24 to February 27, 2013
San Antonio, Texas
Westin La Cantera Hill Country

Join us in San Antonio, Texas as we launch our new national conference, Judicial Institute: Family Law, which will feature a range of cutting-edge family law topics on challenging issues in divorce, custody and visitation, property distribution and finances, military service and families, and the role technology and social media play both in and out of the courtroom. Top judicial and national experts in their fields will provide the latest advances, helpful advice, and successful practices.

The mission of the Judicial Institute: Family Law is to provide the most current information and tools to family and domestic relations judges to improve case processing and outcomes for the children, youth, families, victims, and communities with whom they work.

The NCJFCJ thanks cooperative partners, the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts, and the National Judicial College, for their support with this conference.

Institute for New Juvenile and Family Court Judges
April 8 to April 12, 2013
Reno, Nevada
University of Nevada Campus

This Institute is designed specifically for state and tribal judicial officers who are new to the juvenile and family court bench, or who are returning to this bench after other assignments and desire a refresher course. The curriculum for this intensive 4½ day Institute, previously known as Core College, is designed to encourage core competencies for juvenile and family court judges, and includes (but is not limited to) coverage of judicial leadership and the role of the judge, ethics, decision-making, evidence, child and adolescent development, schools and the court, trauma-informed justice, abuse and neglect, delinquency, interpersonal violence, custody, divorce, self-represented litigants, and dealing with the media.

Accordingly, this training prepares judicial scholars for participation in other NCJFCJ institutes providing in-depth treatment of topics in the areas of family law, delinquency, dependency, and domestic violence. The Institute will be held at the NCJFCJ headquarters on the University of Nevada campus. Institute faculty includes sitting and/or retired judicial officers, as well as content area experts from both academic and applied settings. Please note that with advance notice, NCJFCJ staff can facilitate a “testing-for-credit option” for judicial officers enrolled in the Judicial Studies program at the University of Nevada, Reno.
Enhancing Judicial Skills in Domestic Violence Cases Workshop
April 14 to April 17, 2013
San Francisco, California
The Tuscan Inn

The National Judicial Institute on Domestic Violence (NJIDV), a partnership of the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, and Futures Without Violence (formerly the Family Violence Prevention Fund), offers hands-on, highly interactive workshops that will provide an essential foundation for new and experienced state, tribal and territorial judges and judicial officers to enhance their skills in handling civil and criminal domestic violence cases. Judicial participants will leave the workshop with greater knowledge and skills for handling cases involving domestic violence.

Participation is open to new and experienced state, tribal and territorial judges and judicial officers. Participation is limited to 50 judges and judicial officers. Applications will be reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis.

17th Child Abuse and Neglect Institute: The Role of the Judge
June 3 to June 7, 2013
Reno, Nevada
National Judicial College

The Child Abuse and Neglect Institute (CANI) was created to provide training in dependency court best practices for judicial officers. Offered as a highly interactive in-residence training program, CANI is aimed at judges who have been newly assigned to child abuse and neglect/dependency cases, or judges who have been presiding over these cases for some time and who want the latest information about best practice in this area.

This week-long program brings together local and national faculty to teach on core topics including: the role of the juvenile court judge; judicial leadership and ethics; federal child welfare legislation; substance abuse and permanency planning; medical issues in child abuse and neglect cases; child development, bonding and attachment, and trauma; ICWA and tribal-state court collaboration; former foster youth and reunified parents’ panels; and interactive case scenario discussions.

This conference is designed for judicial officers only. Space is limited for this training.

An additional CANI is being planned for Atlanta in late September/early October, 2013, pending final OJJDP conference approval.
Continuing Judicial Skills in Domestic Violence Cases Program
June 13 to June 15, 2013
Minnetonka, Minnesota
Sheraton Minneapolis West Hotel

The National Judicial Institute on Domestic Violence (NJIDV), a partnership of Futures Without Violence (formerly Family Violence Prevention Fund), the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, and U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women, presents the Continuing Judicial Skills in Domestic Violence Cases Program (CJS) which is specifically designed for judges who have successfully completed the Enhancing Judicial Skills in Domestic Violence Cases Workshop or an equivalent program. The CJS Program addresses judges’ specific assignments at a more intensive level and introduces new topics of special interest. The CJS Program offers choices among four 1-day special topic courses and four 1.5-day court assignment courses. The Program begins Thursday at 8:00 a.m. and concludes on Saturday at noon.

All state, tribal and territorial judges and judicial officers are eligible to attend the workshops, but priority will be given to judges from jurisdictions currently receiving one of the following OVW Grants: Court Training & Improvements Grant Program; Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies and Enforcement of Protection Orders; STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grants Program; Rural Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, Stalking, and Child Abuse Enforcement Assistance Program; and Domestic Violence Transitional Housing Assistance Program. Priority is also given to OVW-funded jurisdictions that send more than one judge.

76th Annual Conference
July 14 to July 17, 2013
Seattle, Washington
The Westin Seattle

Join us in Seattle, Washington for our 76th Annual Conference, which will feature a wide range of juvenile and family law topics including child abuse and neglect, trauma, custody and visitation, judicial leadership, juvenile justice, sex trafficking of minors, family violence, drug courts, psychotropic medications, children testifying in court, juvenile detention alternatives, substance abuse, and the adolescent brain.

The mission of the Annual Conference is to provide cutting-edge information and tools to juvenile and family courts to support their efforts to improve case processing and outcomes for children, youth, families, victims, and communities with whom they work.
Enhancing Judicial Skills in Domestic Violence Cases Workshop
September 29 to October 2, 2013
Atlanta, Georgia
Sheraton Atlanta Hotel

The National Judicial Institute on Domestic Violence (NJIDV), a partnership of the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, and Futures Without Violence (formerly the Family Violence Prevention Fund), offers hands-on, highly interactive workshops that will provide an essential foundation for new and experienced state, tribal and territorial judges and judicial officers to enhance their skills in handling civil and criminal domestic violence cases. Judicial participants will leave the workshop with greater knowledge and skills for handling cases involving domestic violence.

Participation is open to new and experienced state, tribal and territorial judges and judicial officers wishing to enhance their skills in handling civil and criminal domestic violence cases. Participation is limited to 50 judges and judicial officers. Applications will be reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis.

Enhancing Judicial Skills in Domestic Violence Cases Workshop
December 8 to December 11, 2013
Santa Fe, New Mexico
La Fonda on the Plaza

The National Judicial Institute on Domestic Violence (NJIDV), a partnership of the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, and Futures Without Violence (formerly the Family Violence Prevention Fund), offers hands-on, highly interactive workshops that will provide an essential foundation for new and experienced state, tribal and territorial judges and judicial officers to enhance their skills in handling civil and criminal domestic violence cases. Judicial participants will leave the workshop with greater knowledge and skills for handling cases involving domestic violence.

Participation is open to new and experienced state, tribal and territorial judges and judicial officers wishing to enhance their skills in handling civil and criminal domestic violence cases. Participation is limited to 50 judges and judicial officers. Applications will be reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis.

The NCJFCJ has a full calendar of events and training opportunities lined up for 2013. Please visit our website at www.NCJFCJ.org/Educational-Opportunities for more information.
Collaboration and authentic engagement with tribal communities is a promising practice. It needs to happen at federal, state, and local levels to ensure compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and eliminate the disproportionate representation of Native American children in the child welfare system. Congress passed ICWA in 1978 in response to the alarmingly high number of Indian children being removed from their homes by both public and private agencies. Congress declared it is the policy of this Nation to “protect the best interests of Indian children.”

The Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 requires states to “protect the best interests of Indian children.” Many states are collaborating with tribal courts and leaders in innovative ways to ensure permanency and safety for Native American children.

Meaningful and Ongoing Engagement of Tribes and State Courts in Child Protection

By Alicia K. Davis and Gina Jackson

“The Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 requires states to “protect the best interests of Indian children.” Many states are collaborating with tribal courts and leaders in innovative ways to ensure permanency and safety for Native American children.”

“Some state court systems are beginning to recognize that tribal courts can and should be important partners in the administration of justice in this country. . . . Tribal courts are being recognized for their often innovative and effective operations.”
interests of Indian children and to promote the stability and security of Indian tribes and families” (25 U.S.C. § 1902). Each state court is charged to work diligently and creatively to collaborate meaningfully with the state child welfare agency, as well as with Indian tribes, to ensure safety, permanency, and well-being for children. This article considers recent policy and program developments that support state-tribal collaboration in child welfare with examples that demonstrate meaningful and ongoing collaboration with a commitment to respect and mutual learning.

"It’s about our children and our cultures. If we listen to our young people they will lift us out of darkness (Judge Delores Cadiente, former chief justice of the Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska)."

STATE COURT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

In 1993, Congress created the Court Improvement Program (CIP) in each state to improve the handling of child abuse and neglect cases. State courts are required to demonstrate “meaningful, ongoing collaboration” between the courts, social services, and Indian tribes as applicable. “Meaningful, ongoing collaboration” means that courts and agencies will identify and work toward shared goals and activities to increase the safety, permanency, and well-being of children in the child welfare system. Courts must also form a statewide, multidisciplinary task force, which should include tribal representation. The 2010 Census Briefs report that 78 percent of Native American people live outside of American Indian and Alaska Native areas (Norris, Vines, and Hoeffel, 2012). In cities or states without tribes, there are often Native urban organizations that can bring tribal voices to the table.

For the first time since the creation of the CIP, limited funding will be available to tribes through a competitive process. In support of the tribal CIP, the NCJFCJ stated that “building tribal court capacity is an important component to ensure that American Indian and Alaskan Native children are served in their own communities.” The development of the tribal CIP, in conjunction with the state CIP mandates, can lead to a cross-pollination of ideas, from government-to-government and court-to-court, creating a learning community that encompasses state and tribal court colleagues and changes the causal factors that bring children, youth, and families into child welfare systems.

MEANINGFUL COLLABORATION BETWEEN STATE COURTS AND TRIBES

State courts across the country are beginning to involve tribes in the state CIPs, developing relationships built on mutual respect, learning from one another, and acknowledging the historical trauma experienced by Indian people.

Meaningful, ongoing collaboration means that courts and agencies will identify and work toward shared goals and activities to increase the safety, permanency, and well-being of children in the child welfare system.

Acknowledging the local history and experience of the state-tribal relations is foundational to developing authentic relationships. As states take steps in fulfilling the mandate of meaningful collaboration, it is imperative for states to understand how respect is demonstrated in tribal communities and to ensure the collaboration is truly meaningful to tribes.

STATE-TRIBAL COURT ENGAGEMENT

A number of states have tribal representation on their state’s CIP committee, which is essential to foster better understanding among justice systems and to enhance proper ICWA enforcement.

• Since 2009, the North Carolina CIP served as an ad hoc member of the state’s Commission of Indian Affairs’ Standing Committee on Indian Child Welfare. The committee’s mission is to advocate for the rights of Indian families, tribes, and children with regard to suitable and culturally relevant foster care and adoption placement.

• In an effort to engage the state judicial systems, the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas hosted a Tribal-State Judicial Symposium. Participants learned about the tribe’s court system, including their peacemaking court, which uses a cultural foundation and traditional model of problem solving as a cutting-edge best practice to approach family issues, including dependency matters. Judge William Thorne of the Utah Court of Appeals and NCJFCJ Board of Trustees Member said: “This was an example of how, with open minds and good will, parallel judicial systems can learn from each other—discovering new approaches to serving communities and avenues for cooperation.”

Many tribes have welcomed visits from CIPs and their state court counterparts. In August 2011, the Colorado CIP took a team of representatives to meet with leaders from the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, Navajo Nation, and Southern Ute Tribe to foster greater respect and understanding regarding child welfare in the state and tribal courts. The CIP team learned about historical trauma, the creation of reservations, and the removal of Indian children to be placed in boarding schools. They also learned about the Navajo Nation Peacemaking Court, which is a renowned restorative justice program. Participants said that the visit helped the state move beyond the legal requirements of ICWA to an awareness of the trauma generated by earlier policies and an understanding that respecting ICWA is as important as applying ICWA. The Colorado CIP also experienced the importance of family and culture within the Native American communities and the importance of building relationships that build strong communities.

COLLABORATION THROUGH FORUMS AND CONSORTIA

Collaborative forums and consortia can promote resolution of jurisdictional conflicts and interjurisdictional recognition of judgments. Many of these consortia originated from Walking on Common Ground, an ongoing initiative to promote and facilitate collaboration between tribal, federal, and state justice communities.

"The court becomes a community – less punitive, a place for healing, for repairing, and for peacemaking. The greatest lesson that we took away from the visit was the importance of community and the development of community on a systems level (Bill DeLisio, Colorado Family Law Programs Manager)."
In 1997, the New Mexico Supreme Court created the statewide Tribal-State Judicial Consortium to facilitate communication and collaboration between state and tribal judges. Collaborative training has been developed on court orders, IV-E funding, and the tribal best practice of traditional adoptions. Last year, the Pueblos of Laguna and Jemez hosted regional meetings on the rights of incarcerated parents of Indian children involved in the child abuse/neglect system. Through presentations by the Children’s Law Center; tribal and state judges; staff of the New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department, New Mexico Department of Corrections, and Navajo Department of Justice; and national tribal advocates, a report was published to clarify policies, procedures, and culturally appropriate services.

Several states have strong collaborative judicial groups, such as Wisconsin and California. New groups are emerging in other states, such as Nebraska and Washington.

COLLABORATIVE TRAINING

Many issues of noncompliance with ICWA can be significantly addressed by cross-training and communication. There are a number of examples of states and tribes collaborating to provide ICWA training.

This past year the Arizona CIP, in collaboration with several Arizona tribes, held a conference, “Connecting Legacies Working Hand in Hand with ICWA,” with 300 attendees. As a result of close state-tribal relationships, Judge Kami Hart of the Gila River Indian Community and Judge Kathleen Quigley of the Pima County Juvenile Court spearheaded the formation of an ICWA workgroup in the Arizona State, Tribal, and Federal Forum to improve ICWA compliance.

The Mississippi CIP is working with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians to plan its 2nd Annual State-Tribal ICWA Conference and develop a collaborative ICWA curriculum. The first gathering resulted in setting priorities for state and tribal judges, caseworkers, and other system stakeholders. Mississippi has included the tribe as a valued partner on the state CIP team, enhancing a partnership based on respect and trust.

Minnesota held a series of statewide Children’s Justice Initiative Meetings, attended by nearly 1,000 judges, court administrators, attorneys, social workers, tribal representatives, and others. One of the key topics addressed was “Partnering with Tribes to Achieve Timely Permanency for Indian Children,” presented by Anita Fineday, former chief judge of the White Earth Tribal Court. The presentation helped improve state-tribal court relationships and outcomes for Indian children.

Last year, the Indiana CIP invited Chief Judge Michael Petoskey of the Pokagon Band of the Potawatomi Tribal Court to speak at the annual meeting of juvenile court judicial officers. Judge Petoskey spoke about common judicial ground and the band’s desire to develop strong, positive, and cooperative relationships with those working in the child welfare and juvenile justice system.

TOOLS FOR ICWA PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

As states and tribes move toward increasing ICWA compliance, it is imperative that tools and resources are available to collect baseline/ongoing data. Wisconsin established an ICWA review instrument called QUICWA, after completing numerous focus groups with tribal representatives about the types of issues that arose in cases involving Indian children. This consultation with focus groups was instrumental in establishing a state-specific requirement for proof of notice to be included in the court files. These reviews have been tremendously beneficial in encouraging ICWA compliance in Wisconsin.

The QUICWA Compliance Collaborative is a national consortium of Indian tribes, urban organizations, and advocacy groups who work on Indian child welfare issues using ICWA compliance data to advocate
The NCJFCJ, in collaboration with QUICWA, has updated an ICWA Compliance-Court Readiness and Implementation Continuum based upon the innovative work of Tribal STAR and the American Indian Enhancement Project’s Implementation Toolkit, which helps courts assess their current level of “readiness” for implementing provisions of ICWA and for assessing compliance.

The NCJFCJ, in collaboration with QUICWA, has updated an ICWA checklist to be used by judges, attorneys, caseworkers, tribes, and system stakeholders to provide baseline data as to improve ICWA performance in courts across the nation.

Casey Family Programs is working with QUICWA and Michigan State University Law School’s Indigenous Law and Policy Center to collect data. Other states such as Washington may be sites for similar projects.

The University of Minnesota at Duluth is planning to have students use the QUICWA tool and observe court hearings in the Minnesota state courts.

COLLABORATION USING TECHNOLOGY

State court systems with a statewide case management system can and should share child welfare information with tribal courts in their states. Tribal courts have not had the same access to funding for developing case management systems.

Many states are including tribal court contact information on their Web sites to encourage communication. California posts a Tribal Courts Directory, which provides descriptions and contact information. They are also working to pilot an innovative ICWA e-noticing project with the National Center for State Courts to provide electronic notice in lieu of registered, certified mail in ICWA cases. This project will focus on expediting notice to tribes and reducing costs for states.

RESOLUTIONS IN SUPPORT OF STATE-TRIBAL COLLABORATION TO PROTECT CHILDREN

The Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ) and Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA) unanimously adopted “Resolution 5: To Encourage Greater Collaboration Between State Courts and Tribal Courts to Protect Native American Children” last year. The NCJFCJ, in partnership with tribal judicial leaders, resolved that tribal courts should be treated as equal and parallel systems of justice. The National Association for Court Management (NACM) resolved last year to “work with the tribal courts, tribal councils and other tribal authorities to ensure equal treatment of all native families and children at all levels of government.” The resolutions signal intent and demonstrate commitment serving as a guidepost for action. Resolution 5 reads as follows:

WHEREAS, tribal courts serve the children and families of sovereign nations with the same authority and responsibility as state courts; and
WHEREAS, collaboration between state courts and agencies responsible for child protection and education has greatly contributed to the improvement of the process and outcomes of child protection cases around the country; and
WHEREAS, the federal ICWA requires close communication and cooperation between state and tribal courts when a Native American child not residing in Indian Country is removed from her/his home or is offered for adoption; and
WHEREAS, close communication and cooperation between state and tribal courts have been inhibited by: the lack of contact information for tribal judges in many states; the difficulty in electronically exchanging information regarding child protection cases between tribal and state courts; the lack of information regarding the requirements of ICWA, the reasons for those requirements, and the relationship of ICWA to other federal legislation on child welfare such as the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFa) and the Fostering Connections Act; and
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Conference of Chief Justices encourages each court system in states that include Indian Country to:

(1) Encourage the state court judges who hear child protection and adoption cases to communicate and collaborate with their tribal court counterparts when a Native American child or family may be involved in a case;
(2) Provide a brief discussion and description of the state’s tribal courts in new judge orientation programs and materials;
(3) Include on the state court website contact information for each tribal court in the state;
(4) Offer each tribal court in the state the case management system module(s) on child protection used by the state; and
(5) Present training on the requirements of ICWA and the relationship of ICWA to other federal legislation on child welfare such as the ASFa and the Fostering Connections Act for state court judges and invite tribal judges to participate in that training.

CCJ/COSCA Resolution 5 (January 2011)

CONCLUSION

There is a tremendous opportunity for state courts and tribes not only to collaborate but to learn from one another to meet the needs of children and families in a culturally appropriate manner. The federal mandate that state CIPs engage in meaningful and ongoing collaboration with tribes is a solid beginning, a foundation to build upon. These examples of innovative state-tribal collaboration require working together to develop a common vision of safety, permanency, and well-being that can lead toward improved relationships and compliance with ICWA. Successful collaborative efforts built on respect, cooperation, and mutual responsibility will ultimately light a path toward better outcomes for Native children.

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AUTHOR’S NOTES
*This article was originally published in Future Trends in State Courts, a publication of the National Center of State Courts. It was dedicated to Judge Deloresa Cadiente (1947-2011), former chief justice of the Central Council of the Tlingit and Haidn Indian Tribes of Alaska, a champion for honoring tribal sovereignty through unity and advocacy. You have challenged us and inspired us to move forward with vision.

RESOURCES:
Juvenile Drug Court (JDC) professionals are innovated, dedicated professionals who often get promoted, are appointed to work in other areas of the court, or find new career paths. For this reason there is a substantial amount of turnover among JDC team members. In some cases, there may just be burn-out, as working on a JDC team is extremely demanding. Because this issue permeates most jurisdictions that have a JDC program, it is important to implement a process to “transition” new team members onto the existing drug court team. Keep the transition plans simple; focus on 1) what do new team members need to know and 2) what is the best way for new team members to learn about their role on the JDC.

Below are some tips or strategies that will assist teams in creating a well-thought out transition policy for new JDC team members, as well as for the youth and families they serve:

1. CREATE “LEARNING PACKETS”
A JDC program should have several “Learning Packets” on hand to give to new and incoming team members. These packets can serve as training materials because it is extremely important for team members who have not worked with adolescents or in the juvenile drug court field to engage in some “pre-work” before joining the team and working with the youth and families. This packet should include a current list of contact information for stakeholders and team members, an updated community partnership map, a current participant guide, and a current policy and procedure manual. In addition, there are several publications which will help new team members better understand the philosophy behind juvenile drug courts, as well as adolescent development, and ways to further comprehend this population. Below is a list of resources that would be helpful to add to the Learning Packet:

• The Juvenile Drug Court Strategies in Practice
• Managing and Sustaining Your Juvenile Drug Court
• Ensuring Fidelity to the 16 Strategies in Practice
• Using “Sober Support” Groups in Your Juvenile Court
• Exploring the Evidence: The Value of Juvenile Drug Courts
• Seven Things Juvenile Courts Should Know About Learning Disabilities
• Ten Things Every Juvenile Court Judge Should Know About Trauma and Delinquency

All of these publications are housed and can be downloaded from the Juvenile Drug Court Information Center, located on the NCJFCJ’s website at: http://www.ncjfcj.org/our-work/juvenile-drug-courts.

2. SHADOW EXISTING TEAM MEMBERS
Teams should make a concerted effort to give incoming members an opportunity to work with the outgoing member to get a good “feel” for the position and what their role will be on the team. Consider drafting a checklist (these should be role-dependent) of duties or information that should be conveyed during the day so nothing is forgotten or accidentally skipped. See example checklist for a new JDC coordinator below:

JDC Coordinator Checklist
☐ Review incentives and sanction tracking procedure
☐ Review file sharing procedure
☐ Review pre-court staffing structure
3. GIVE NEW TEAM MEMBERS A WAY TO GAIN OWNERSHIP IN THE JDC.

Transitioning to working on a JDC can be difficult for new team members. The JDC philosophy often feels foreign and is generally very different from the more traditional “adversarial” court process. Creating a way for new team members to have input on JDC policies is a great way to get them up to speed on the fundamental concepts underlying the program and provides a way for them to have input and gain ownership in the program. For example, many JDCs revisit and update their Community Map on a yearly basis. Assigning new team members to be part of the working group for the Community Map project allows them to have input and buy-in to the program.

Frequently new team members may challenge the status quo of the JDC. This can be an opportunity for the JDC team to revisit the reasons why the drug court exists, address policy issues, and analyze the need for changes in structure and practice.

4. WHEN NEW MEMBERS JOIN THE JDC TEAM, FACILITATE A TEAM BUILDING ACTIVITY

Teams are encouraged to work in a simple activity or exercise when new members join the team. The activity described below (This I Believe activity) may prove to be very helpful as a team building exercise, as well as a great opportunity for team members (new and old) to reflect on their individual role on the team. The activity generally takes around 20 minutes. Consider doing this during the first pre-court staffing or get together as a team for a brown-bag lunch. See below for full instructions:

On National Public Radio there is a series called This I Believe. Please visit: http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=90368555 to listen to a particular news piece in the series (If you have access to the internet). This segment describes the background of the series, why it is important to get diverse opinions, and why these opinions can create a web or connection between diverse populations. Because each team member comes from different agencies or backgrounds professionally, it is important to hear the individual beliefs connected to working within a juvenile drug court and the program itself.

Activity: Choose a team member to lead or facilitate. If possible share the following essay with the team - Frederic Reamer’s essay, The Real Consequences of Justice can be found at: http://thisibelieve.org/essay/22/. This essay in particular, applies to the justice system.

Direct team members to create their own “This I Believe” statement centered on their views, vision, or expectations for working as a team member in a juvenile drug court program. For example:

- I believe the juvenile drug court in my community will give access to valuable resources to youth struggling with substance abuse.
- I believe I will be a valuable team member on our JDC team because I am a court appointed defense attorney, and I protect the rights of the youth that are involved in the system.
- I believe a JDC will reduce recidivism rates among youth that abuse alcohol and other drugs.

Guide team members through this process. Feel free to use one of the examples above or create your own “This I Believe” statements regarding your JDC. Have each team member read their statement aloud to the other team members and then discuss the commonalities in each of the statements. It may surprise everyone how many there are.

5. DON’T FORGET ABOUT THE YOUTH AND FAMILIES!

It may seem confusing for participants and family members to walk into court one week and find that the JDC coordinator who they have been working with, and come to trust and even like, has left and been replaced by someone they have never seen before. To alleviate this type of confusion, it is suggested that teams design an orientation group session for youth and families to meet new team members. This will, hopefully, provide a seamless transition for the participants. Below are a few tips the team should consider:

- Have the orientation correspond with bi-weekly or weekly court sessions that are already in place
- Have the outgoing and incoming team members make a few comments to the group
- A short question and answer segment will give participants and families an opportunity to ask any questions that are weighing on their minds
- Suggest that the new team member provide a treat or snacks for the orientation (or the team – make it a celebration)
- Give families updated program materials (i.e., contact information sheets/brochures)

In addition, when a new team member joins the JDC team it is important to take the time to update all program materials as soon as possible. Because JDC participants rely so heavily on JDC team members, updates or additions need to be made, so youth and families will know who to call and how to contact them. Participants are required to do many, many things while they are in the program, and making this an easy process will help decrease any confusion and mishaps that may make a situation worse than it has to be.

6. INTRODUCE THE NEW TEAM MEMBERS TO THE STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE

It is important to keep current stakeholders engaged in the JDC “happenings” (i.e., program outcomes, upcoming events, and new team members). Organize a meeting to introduce new team members to the current stakeholder committee members. This can coincide with a quarterly meeting schedule or you can organize a meeting just to introduce the incoming member (i.e., brown-bag lunch or a pizza night). Much like an orientation for the youth and families, try to make this transition very strength-based and celebratory.

7. CODIFY THE TRANSITION POLICY IN THE JDC PROCEDURE MANUAL

Consider having a designated team member role compile transition packets, update contact information and programs guides, coordinate shadowing efforts, and orientate current youth and families. Designating a specific “role” on the JDC team instead of an actual person will alleviate having to find another person on the team to complete the task, if that particular person is to leave for one reason or another. Within the procedure manual, have a detailed checklist to assist the incoming team member who will take over this responsibility.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:
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When Dr. Shawn Marsh, NCJFCJ Chief Program Officer, Juvenile Law, called and asked if I was interested in going to Morocco this past December to train juvenile court judges, I did not hesitate. One of the advantages of being retired is that I have some control over my schedule. I said yes, despite the fact that the trip was complex and only a month away. My contact in Rabat, Morocco (the capital) was Vasantha Rao, an American attorney working in the United States Department of Justice (DOJ). From her I learned that I would be joined by Melodee Hanes, the Acting Director of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), and Dr. Rodney Erwin, a neuro-psychiatrist from Marin County, California.

The training project was organized by the DOJ. Apparently, the Moroccan judiciary wanted to learn about juvenile justice in the United States. Moroccan judicial leaders contacted the DOJ and arranged for this three-day training in Rabat.

Morocco has strong ties with France, having been under French control during much of the 20th century. The Moroccan legal system is modeled on the French civil law. Morocco, a North African kingdom of approximately 32,500,000, is a predominantly Muslim country, with a rich history dating back 5,000 years. Its most famous cities include Casablanca, Marrakesh, Rabat, and Fes. Arabic and French are the primary languages, although some speak English. Moroccans use Arabic script often sub-titled with French. While the traditional Islamic family structure means that some women remain covered (hijab) and live a limited public life, many younger women work outside the home and dress in Western clothing. I found the people friendly and gracious. Several judges invited me to stay in their homes while I was visiting.

My first question about the training revolved around the differences between the civil law system and our common law. Would our American laws and practices be useful to a country with different legal procedures? The civil law dates back to Roman times. The Roman codes were unified in the sixth century during the reign of Justinian, an Emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire. Legal scholars in many European countries refined the civil law over the centuries that followed. One of most significant codifications was the Napoleonic Code created when Napoleon ruled France. The Napoleonic Code has been very influential and has helped shape the civil law systems now in place in approximately 150 countries including most of Southern Europe, Northern Africa, Russia, Japan, and South America. The civil law has also left traces in the United States, namely in Louisiana.

The significant differences between the civil and common law systems include the following:

1. Judges in the civil law tradition select their profession at the time they start law school. They are appointed to their position fresh from school. As a result, a judge will ordinarily begin his or her career earlier in life than a judge in the common law country.

2. Civil law judges look to the codes and legal principles for answers to all legal questions. They do not look to case law. Cases are rarely reported or read by judges as they have no authority for a sitting judge. The concept of stare decisis (a lower court being bound to follow the rulings of a higher court) is unknown in the civil law.

3. The judicial branch in civil law countries is not as independent or powerful as judges in common law countries. The legislative and executive branches of civil law countries are the primary policy makers. As a result, judges have limited power to interpret the law. Judges cannot declare a law to be unconstitutional. Judges resemble bureaucrats rather than members of a separate, co-equal branch of government. As Professor Merryman writes, “[t]hey are civil servants, functionaries.”

4. A juvenile court judge in a civil law country is expected to investigate the facts of cases appearing in court. The judge can gather evidence, interview witnesses, and still preside as decision maker in the case before the court. These are characteristics of an inquisitorial system as opposed to our adversarial system.
5. A juvenile court judge does not have the independence that a common law judge has. The role of the juvenile court judge seems confined to investigation, decision making, and running the calendar. Juvenile judges do not understand their role to be a community leader on behalf of the children who appear in their court.

Despite these differences, we met with 40-50 of the most enthusiastic and dedicated young judges and prosecutors that we could imagine. Seated in a large room with 5 to 7 judges and prosecutors at a table along with translators and modern technology, we engaged in a vigorous dialogue for three days. My presentation included outlining hypothetical fact situations and asking the judges at each table to discuss their approach to each problem. A volunteer from one or more tables would discuss the problem. At the outset, the volunteer would make a speech – indeed, we heard many 5-10 minute speeches about how eager the judges were to learn about best practices from the United States, how they were conscious of international law, how they followed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and how they were eager to redirect and rehabilitate young law breakers. I have never encountered a group of judges more committed to rehabilitation.

At the same time, the judges did not seem comfortable becoming active in the community. I suspect the idea that they might convene meetings, encourage the creation of volunteer groups, speak out about the needs of children, or other “off the bench” activities were foreign to them. We suggested CASA as a model they might be interested in, but they were not interested in the idea of being a catalyst for the creation of such an organization. It was too different from their perceived role as a juvenile court judge.

Dr. Erwin spoke about children’s brain development and lack of maturity. He reviewed both brain structure and development and recent United States Supreme Court cases on children’s accountability. The judges showed both interest and knowledge about these issues, several of them referring to the Quran (Koran) and its discussion of brain development. Director Hanes discussed the work of OJJDP and focused in particular on its deinstitutionalization project. Morocco has many fewer children in custody than in comparable areas in the United States, but some mixing of adults and children occurs.

Some of our suggestions included separating incarcerated children from adults, including defense attorneys in future trainings, connecting with community groups that might provide support for the children and families appearing in the juvenile court, and bringing together professionals working within the juvenile court system for meetings to identify and implement best practices.

Our visit included a meeting with the United States Ambassador to Morocco, Samuel Kaplan, and his wife. Ambassador Kaplan hails from Minnesota and knows that state’s judicial leaders including former Chief Justice Kathleen Blatz and former President of the NCJFCJ, Lindsay Arthur. The Ambassador is an attorney and has strong views on how the Moroccan judiciary could improve its juvenile court. Those views were similar to our suggestions.

The judges and prosecutors enjoyed the training. The original schedule included five days, but the judges could not be absent from court for that length of time. As a result, we were unable to discuss some important issues, including judicial ethics. Some asked if we would return, or, if possible, could they visit the United States. We are hopeful that our meeting will only be the beginning of a productive relationship.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:
Judge Leonard Edwards (Ret.), Past NCJFCJ President, San Francisco, CA

END NOTES

The NCJFCJ Hosts a Variety of International Groups at Reno Headquarters

CHILE
On August 30, 2012, staff from NCJFCJ met with an advocate from Chile. Discussion covered law enforcement and the courts role in prosecuting sex traffickers, initiatives aimed to stop the trafficking of minors, and the impact that legalized prostitution may have on sex trafficking crimes.

TURKEY
On September 4, 2012, staff from NCJFCJ met with a Turkish family court judge to discuss family law, child welfare, and family violence issues. The impact of judicial training and judicial advocacy was discussed. Information was exchanged on the processing of domestic violence cases and specific training in domestic violence issues for judges. Staff and the judge addressed the need for more training on international abductions of children by parents and increasing knowledge of available resources.

SENEGAL
On October 9, 2012, staff from NCJFCJ met with a group of four Senegalese judges. Discussions occurred on the topics of judicial training and education and training and education opportunities for allied professionals and court partners. Information was exchanged about the processing of juvenile delinquency cases and differences in philosophies towards juveniles. In Senegal, a child is considered a child of the entire community. A child is never labeled a criminal, but is a child in conflict with the law, and the child is always viewed as a victim. Society is responsible for the child’s behavior because they are considered too young to understand the law and abide by the rules. The judge is not alone in intervening in the child’s life because the judge is viewed as not having all the necessary tools to help rehabilitate the child. The judge must work in concert with the child psychologist, social workers, and educators as it is considered likely that the child was a victim at some point prior to being in conflict with the law. The visiting judges commented that they thought it was very sad to see that juveniles in the U.S. are locked up for long periods of time.

LEBANON
In November, NCJFCJ staff met with a Women in Justice delegation from Lebanon which included a magistrate, prosecutors, and community leaders for justice programs. Discussion was centered on family law topics related to domestic abuse and human trafficking issues. Discussion also covered juvenile justice and incarceration issues.

MEXICO
A delegation from Mexico which included a judge, researcher, attorneys, and an academician met with NCJFCJ staff in December with the purpose of focusing on oral arguments and an understanding of the founding principles of the U.S. justice system. Discussion also covered the differences in the trial systems in the U.S. and Mexico.
Judges are the gatekeepers of the juvenile dependency system, the ultimate decision-makers on child welfare cases, and determiners of the fate of the children and families involved in the system. With this great power comes a great responsibility to make the most informed and best decisions possible for this child and this family, considering each family’s unique circumstances. The one family, one judge model of decision-making, whereby one judge oversees a case from the very first hearing to case closure, is a best practice that can enhance the decision-making ability of judges.

Despite the belief that one family, one judge models may improve efficiency and lead to better decision-making, little has been done to examine the potential benefits of the model work out in real-world practice—until now. A recent collaboration between the Baltimore Juvenile Court, the University of Maryland School of Social Work (UMSSW), and the NCJFCJ has led to a broad-based assessment of how one family, one judge programs might affect children and families.

Planning for the assessment began shortly after the Baltimore City Juvenile Court became part of the Victims Act Model Court project with the inclusion of a local professor on the Model Court executive team. From 2009 to 2011, a series of multi-method assessments began to explore the use of the one family, one judge practice. Results from these studies are expected to be published during the next year in *Family Court Review, Juvenile and Family Court Journal*, and the *Journal of Juvenile Justice*.

**WHY ONE FAMILY, ONE JUDGE?**

Use of the one family, one judge system of oversight has long been recommended for and utilized within the juvenile dependency court system. Many of the NCJFCJ Model Courts, as well as other courts around the country, utilize some form of one family, one judge model. Proponents of the model believe it can increase the efficiency of case processing, and allow for more informed decision-making. Juvenile dependency cases are complex and often lengthy, taking on average 13 months to reach case closure. A one family, one judge model can help manage the complexities that are inherent in juvenile dependency cases.

Judges who have the case from start to finish may feel a greater sense of ownership or responsibility, knowing that they will have it through to completion, whatever the outcome. Judicial consistency means that judges are more likely to have all the information on the case, from start to finish, which can help them understand the special circumstances unique to the family appearing before them. This model may also serve to meaningfully engage the families in the process, as parents may feel more connected by seeing the same judge at every hearing.

**EVALUATING ONE FAMILY, ONE JUDGE**

The Baltimore Juvenile Court became an NCJFCJ Model Court in 2005, creating a Model Court executive team to lead systems change efforts. Executive team collaboratives are encouraged to include key stakeholders and community partners.

One of these community partners linked the executive team with a professor from the University of Maryland, School of Social Work, who became a major asset in evaluating court practice. The professor spent the better part of a year meeting with the executive team and...
gaining a more in-depth understanding of the current evaluation priorities and current court practice. Using this understanding, the professor designed a course for her Master’s level social work students, which would allow the students to begin evaluating different Model Court practices, including the one family, one judge model, which Baltimore implemented in late 2006 and early 2007.

When researchers from the NCJFCJ discovered the plans for evaluating Model Court practice, they joined the evaluation efforts, creating a unique opportunity for an efficient and cost-effective evaluation of the one family, one judge model. Details of this collaborative relationship are reported in the July/August 2011 issue of Judicature.

To date, three Master’s level social work courses have been held, all of which included an evaluation component related specifically to Baltimore’s implementation of a Model Court. Students, under the oversight of the professor and NCJFCJ researchers, have designed and implemented a stakeholder survey, case file review, and a parent engagement survey at the Baltimore Juvenile Court.

These evaluations have proved useful on multiple levels. First, they provided students with an opportunity to learn evaluation in the field. Second, the student reports of findings were provided to the Baltimore Model Court executive team to inform discussion related to trouble-shooting implementation concerns and setting of goals and next steps for systems change. Finally, data from these research efforts were used to write some of the first research articles on the use of the one family, one judge model, with a broader dissemination strategy that could affect practice on a national level.

EFFECTIVENESS OF ONE FAMILY, ONE JUDGE

The first evaluation found that stakeholders believe that the one family, one judge model improves fairness and consistency of decision-making, and also raises important concerns regarding implementation of the program. More information on the findings can be found in the published article, which will appear in a forthcoming issue of Family Court Review.

This evaluation conducted a survey of 165 professional stakeholders about the one family, one judge program in Baltimore. Students, under the professor’s oversight, identified priority areas of the Model Court Executive Team through focus groups with key stakeholders. The survey asked participants about their perception of court practices related to one family, one judge, including changes in workload, barriers to implementation, and perceptions of fairness.

Based on discussion with the researchers and the professor, it was decided that the next course would conduct a case file review to compare cases prior to implementation of the one family, one judge model to cases that opened after implementation. NCJFCJ researchers trained students on the use of a structured case file review instrument and assisted in data collection. The study used a pre/posttest design to compare cases that opened after the court became a Model Court but before implementation of the one family, one judge model to cases that opened immediately following implementation of the model. The case file review study examined multiple case processing outcome variables, including timeliness, use of continuances, and permanency.

Results revealed that every additional judge on the case increased the number of continuances per case and the time to achievement of permanency. Full findings are reported in two articles that will be appearing in the Juvenile and Family Court Journal in early 2013.

One part of this analysis examined timeliness of case processing, both early case timeliness and time to permanency. Timeliness provides a realistic assessment of the efficiency of court practice and adherence to statutory requirements in the case. A second part of this analysis (reported in a separate article) examined one particular practice – the use of continuances. Juvenile dependency cases are unique in the number of stakeholders and parties to the case. As each party may request a continuance, or may be unavailable for a court hearing, creating a need for a continuance, it is safe to assume that continuances in this type of court could be fairly high. Judicial continuity, achieved through use of a one family, one judge model, could effectively reduce the number of continuances on the case, by holding parties accountable and moving forward even without all parties present.

As a final piece of the case file review evaluation, researchers examined how one family, one judge might affect the achievement of permanency. One of the primary goals of the child welfare system is to find a safe permanent home for the children in care. This can be measured in multiple ways, both in the number of children achieving specific permanency outcomes (e.g. reunification, adoption), and in the time it takes to achieve these.

The article on permanency examines the effects of one family, one judge on both permanency measures. Does one family, one judge affect permanency? Results are revealed in the published article, forthcoming in the Journal of Juvenile Justice.

The last method of evaluation included surveying parents. Building on prior work, students developed a parent survey, which the professor and research vetted and modified. Students administered the survey to 153 parents, guardians, and relatives who attended juvenile cases at the Baltimore Juvenile Court. Data from this study is currently being analyzed and will be written up for dissemination early in 2013, providing yet another perspective on the one family, one judge model.

LOOKING FORWARD

This work not only provides an important first step in evaluating the one family, one judge model in juvenile dependency cases, but also illustrates the importance of engaging community partners. Including a faculty member from a local university in the Model Court executive team provided an excellent way to leverage resources and create opportunities for evaluating Model Court practices, such as use of one family, one judge.

While the research is modest in comparison to more rigorous studies that could have been conducted with more time, more expertise, and more funding, the results are still meaningful, not only to the Baltimore Juvenile Court, but to the juvenile dependency field. The one family, one judge model appears to affect positively case processing and outcomes. Future research should build upon this work, expanding the purview of the one family, one judge model, including how the model may specifically affect judicial decisions in juvenile dependency cases, and the degree of improvement in the efficiency of case processing.

FINDINGS FROM ONE FAMILY, ONE JUDGE RESEARCH INDICATE:

- Implementation challenges can affect workload.
- Most stakeholders believe the model increases fairness and consistency of decisions.
- Increases in the number of judges on the case are related to:
  - Increased time to case closure (permanency)
  - Increases in the number of continuances
- Use of the model is related to improved permanency outcomes.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

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Project ONE Enters Site Implementation Phase

Project ONE (One Judge – One Family; No Wrong Door; Equal Access to Justice) was developed by NCJFCJ’s members who were asked to identify issues and priorities suitable for system reform. Many topics of ongoing concern to juvenile and family court judges were offered. Meeting the needs of cross-over children—children in the dependency system who cross-over into the juvenile justice system and vice versa—was identified as the most vexing issue facing their courts.

With visionary support from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the NCJFCJ Cross-Over Committee was formed. As the committee moved forward on its charge of identifying issues and potential solutions for challenges that face cross-over children, committee judges realized they were not only seeing children and families who were positioned in silos in dependency or juvenile justice courtrooms, but that these judges saw these families simultaneously in the family court, the probate court, the domestic court, and other parallel avenues of court system involvement. Moreover, these parallel avenues of court system involvement were frequently not coordinated amongst each other, requiring families to navigate multiple, often conflicting requirements in their attempts to achieve resolution of the issues that brought them to the court system. The judges on the committee conceived of an integrated, broadly competent, court-based approach to serving children, families, and victims of domestic violence, and Project ONE was born.

The NCJFCJ envisions an expedited and coordinated judicial system for cases involving children, youth, and families that ensures swift, fair justice and access to appropriate supportive services to promote positive outcomes and prevent unnecessary court involvement. Project ONE provides judges and allied professionals with a guiding model, training, technical assistance, and supporting research and examines and modifies practice to maximize judicial coordination of dependency, delinquency, and family law, including domestic violence cases, both within and among courts.

In June 2012, the project moved into the site implementation phase and launched a competitive process to select six initial sites for implementation. The selected sites are:

- Milwaukee County Circuit Court, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Honorable Marshall B. Murray, Lead Judge
- Jefferson County Family Court, Louisville, Kentucky; Honorable Joan Byer, Lead Judge
- North Okaloosa County Unified Family Court, Crestview, Florida; Honorable Terrance Ketchel, Lead Judge
- Orleans Parish Juvenile Court, New Orleans, Louisiana; Honorable Ernestine S. Gray, Lead Judge
- Sixth Judicial Circuit Court (Pasco County), Dade City, Florida; Honorable Lynn Tepper, Lead Judge
- Second Judicial District Court, Family Division (Washoe County), Reno, Nevada; Honorable Egan Walker, Lead Judge

In July 2012, at the 75th Annual Conference in New Orleans, LA, the first meeting of the Lead Judges from the six selected sites occurred. The Lead Judges were joined by members of the Project ONE Steering Committee and NCJFCJ staff and spent a day exploring the key principles of the project, intended project outcomes, and site-specific challenges the selected courts are facing. The selected sites are now examining and assessing their case coordination processes as they are preparing for their first onsite technical assistance visits from project staff.

Family Court Demonstration Initiative

The NCJFCJ, in partnership with the Battered Women’s Justice Project, the Office on Violence Against Women, and the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), is embarking on a new technical assistance project, the Family Court Demonstration Initiative (FCDI), to improve the family court response to custody cases involving domestic violence.

Focusing particularly on parenting and co-parenting outcomes, which protect the emotional and physical well-being of victimized parents and their children, FCDI partners will select three to five sites with strong judicial leadership and committed community partners to develop a road map for cultural and procedural change.

Throughout calendar years 2013 and 2014, project partners will be engaged in the following processes:

- Selection of three to five communities, which will receive assistance in assessing their court structures and processes as they relate to decision-making on child custody and parenting time;
- Provision of technical assistance to each of these sites, which will be informed by national experts from relevant disciplines (including underserved and marginalized communities) and a significant body of research indicating how and where courts fail to address the needs of victim parents and their children; and
- Coordination, with leadership from NIJ, of meaningful evaluation mechanisms so that we can measure the impact of this process (that is, assessment and implementation of long-recommended changes to court culture and processes) on the demonstration initiative courts and the families they serve, and predict the impact of investment in future such initiatives.

*Image: [Family Court Demonstration Initiative](https://example.com) [Family Court Demonstration Initiative](https://example.com) [Family Court Demonstration Initiative](https://example.com)*
For the past three years, the National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ) has awarded scholarships to students who will become the next generation of scholars, researchers, lawyers, judges, and other professionals through the Maurice B. Cohill, Jr., Young Investigator Award. The scholarship program is for high school juniors and seniors who demonstrate exemplary skills in researching and writing about current issues surrounding the juvenile justice system. The 2012 Cohill Young Investigator Award was presented to Alexander Maxwell for his research paper The Right of a Juvenile to a Trial by Jury. In several states, juveniles are not afforded a right to trial by jury; Maxwell examined the pros and cons of the current system in order to make a recommendation to satisfy both sides.

Maxwell stands out as an exceptional example of a student with the potential to accomplish many great things. He is currently completing his senior year of high school in Granville, OH. Last summer he participated in a junior scholars program at Miami University in Oxford, OH. His passion for the justice system is plainly evident in his research paper. Although he has yet to decide where he would like to attend college, his career path is certain. Maxwell plans on receiving his undergraduate degree in finance or accounting and then will apply to law school, and possibly one day become a judge.

Maxwell decided to enter the contest after his school’s “Junior Shadow Day” where he shadowed a juvenile criminal defense attorney. After hearing stories from the attorney, it inspired him deeply and he applied for the scholarship.

“My future goals will be impacted by this scholarship because it helps to validate my passion for the criminal justice system; it has helped me to refocus more of my career goals towards the legal profession,” Maxwell said.

In a letter expressing his gratitude for winning the award, Maxwell stated, “I just hope that one day I will be able to adequately repay the chance that your organization has provided to me. I hope that one day you will be conducting research and notice my name as a judge, willing to give anyone a fair trial in our legal system; and know that your scholarship helped to get me to the bench.”

Three other students were awarded for their research papers as well. They included: SECOND PLACE: Kace Cook—The Causes of Juvenile Delinquency. Cook researched four major causes of juvenile delinquency and offered possible solutions. THIRD PLACE (TIE): Stephanie Tonade—Juvenile Delinquency and Dependency. Tonade looked at the causes of delinquency to make recommendations for the best possible way to rehabilitate juvenile delinquents. THIRD PLACE (TIE): Rachel Wise—Civil Citation Makes Sense! Wise’s paper looks at Florida’s Civil Citation program for first-time juvenile offenders and offers perspectives and research, both pro and con.
Imagine a society where every man, woman, and child has access to fair, equal, and timely justice. That’s what we work toward every day at the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

Your support will allow us to continue to fulfill our mission.

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