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To: Special Committee on Foster Care Adequacy

From: Iraida Orr, Principal Research Analyst

Re: Foster Care Workgroups, Task Forces, and Committees

The Special Committee on Foster Care Adequacy, as part of its charge from the Legislative Coordinating Council, is to “evaluate whether a working group consisting of attorneys in the area of family law, judges, foster parents, and parents of reintegrated children would aid in addressing foster care concerns.” This memorandum provides information regarding existing foster care workgroups, task forces, and committees, which may be of assistance in the Special Committee’s consideration of the appointment of a workgroup to address foster care adequacy and in discussing the possible membership make-up of such a workgroup.

Juvenile Offender/Child in Need of Care Advisory Committee

The Judicial Council (Council) has established advisory committees tasked with reviewing specific areas of law and making recommendations to the Council for needed improvement. These projects may be initiated by the Council, assigned by the Legislature, or requested by the Kansas Supreme Court. Members of the Council’s advisory committees are authorized compensation and allowances under KSA 20-2206.

Appointments to advisory committees are made by the Council. When a vacancy occurs, existing members may provide recommendations to the Council regarding the replacement. There are no fixed terms or set requirements for the composition or number of members on an advisory committee. Most committees have 10 to 12 members, although some are larger. In appointing members to a committee, an attempt is made to “get all the voices to the table” regarding the advisory committee topic and to ensure different interests and geographic regions are represented. Sometimes, as in the case of the Foster Parents’ Bill of Rights, *ad hoc* members are appointed to join the regular members on the advisory committee to study that particular issue.

The Juvenile Offender/Child in Need of Care (JO/CINC) Advisory Committee is one of several advisory committees established by the Judicial Council. The JO/CINC Advisory Committee monitors the Revised Kansas Code for the Care of Children and the Revised Kansas Juvenile Justice Code and updates, as needed, the forms it prepared for use under these codes. Additionally, the JO/CINC Advisory Committee studies juvenile-related issues. The Council’s website lists four meeting dates in 2015 for the JO/CINC Advisory Committee.

According to the Judicial Council's website, the current members of this Advisory Committee are:

- Honorable Maritza Segarra, Chairperson (Junction City)—Geary County District Court Judge and a member of the Judicial Council;
- Kathy Armstrong (Topeka)—Staff Attorney for Prevention and Protection Services, Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF);
- Marc Bennett (Wichita)—Sedgwick County District Attorney;
- Honorable Dan Brooks (Wichita)—Sedgwick County District Court Judge;
- Charlene Brubaker (Hays)—Assistant Ellis County Attorney who works exclusively in JO and CINC matters;
- Kathryn Carter (Topeka)—Director of the Racial Profiling and Biased-Based Policing Unit of the Kansas Attorney General's Office;
- Jeff Cowger (Topeka)—Deputy General Counsel, Kansas Department of Corrections, Juvenile Services;
- Donald W. Hymer (Olathe)—Johnson County Assistant District Attorney;
- Honorable Jeffrey L. Jack (Parsons)—Labette County District Court Judge;
- Professor Richard E. Levy (Lawrence)—J.B. Smith Distinguished Professor of Constitutional Law at the University of Kansas School of Law;
- Senator Julia Lynn (Olathe)—Business owner, Senate Assistant Majority Leader, member of Senate Judiciary Committee;
- Rachel Y. Marsh (Halstead)—Attorney with Saint Francis Community Services;
- Janette Meis (Hays)—Previous Kansas CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) State Director;
- Representative Janice L. Pauls (Hutchinson)—Attorney, previous ranking minority member on House Corrections and Juvenile Justice and House Judiciary Committees;
- Honorable Steven M. Roth (Westmoreland)—Pottawatomie County District Magistrate Judge; and
- Dawn Rouse (Topeka)—Office of Judicial Administration.

In 2014, the JO/CINC Advisory Committee was assigned a study on the topic of legal rights of foster parents, as addressed in 2014 Sub. for SB 394—the Foster Parents’ Bill of Rights. Six additional temporary members were appointed to the Advisory Committee to ensure foster parents and other relevant stakeholders were part of the discussion. The JO/CINC Advisory Committee Report on the legal rights of foster parents is available at <http://www.kansasjudicialcouncil.org/FINAL%20SB%20394%20Foster%20Parent%20Report%20-%20with%20attachments.pdf>.

Other Foster Care Workgroups, Task Forces, and Committees

The Kansas Department for Children and Families provided a list of existing foster care workgroups, task forces, and committees. According to DCF representatives, most of the following stakeholders would be represented in one or more of the groups listed: judges, Office of Judicial Administration, attorneys (including guardians *ad litem* and prosecutors), court appointed special advocates (CASAs), foster parents, birth parents, and representatives of numerous state agencies and entities and non-governmental agencies and entities that have a role in or contact with the child welfare system. The list provided by DCF is attached.

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Enclosures

Evaluate whether a working group consisting of attorneys in the area of family law, judges, foster parents and parents with reintegrated children would aid in addressing foster care concerns.

***Please note that in an effort to keep this list a summary, it does not include each member specifically, but all members can be provided.**

- **Supreme Court Task Force on Permanency Planning (SCTFPP)-Chaired by Wyandotte Co. District Court Judge Daniel Cahill**
- **Judicial Council Juvenile Offender/Child in Need of Care Subcommittee**
- **Permanency Advisory Committee**
- **Citizen Review Panel-Custody to Transition**
- **Children's Alliance**
- **KBORG-Multidisciplinary group which address foster parent issues/concerns**
- **Kansas Adoptive and Foster Parent Association (approx. 2000 members) Official affiliate of the National Adoptive and Foster Parent Association**
- **Kansas Family Advisory Network, Inc.-Advocates and supports parents who have had contact with the child welfare system**
- **Children's Alliance-provides Trauma Informed Partnering for Safety and Permanency-Model Approach to Partnering and Parenting (TIPS-MAPP) training as well as ongoing trainings for foster parents**
- **CPA Forum-Organized by DCF CPA and Licensing Division**
- **Kansas Adoption Permanency Planning (KAPP)-KU has a federal grant through 2018 to address systemic changes to ensure everyone is using the same screening and assessment tools. Case Plans should then be based on results of such screening/assessment to ensure child's needs are met**
- **Psychotropic Medication Workforce-DCF, KDADS, MCOs, DCF Contractors (who then push information out to the Child Placing Agencies-CPAs).**
- **DCF is currently working with National Resource Center on Diligent Recruitment to address effective recruitment of adoptive and foster parents and relatives**

NOTE: DCF has a Quality Assurance process in place which involves review of approx. 1400 cases (Case Reviews) annually. The case reviews are done on a quarterly basis and numerous questions are posed and answered as a result of the review. The information is provided to DCF regions and contractors and is utilized to assess and determine what needs to be addressed to ensure needed improvement and quality services for children and families DCF serves.

Additionally, DCF PPS has a Continuous Performance Improvement process in place. Projects/issues are identified and process is implemented to produce resolutions/recommendations. A Steering Committee (PPS Data Unit and Regional Performance Improvement Supervisors) is the lead on facilitating the group engaging in the process. Members of each group vary as they are identified based on the specific issue/problem to be addressed.

DCF has a Foster Parent and Youth Ombudsman who works with DCF Office of Customer Service to respond to requests for information, concerns and complaints.