

JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN TASK FORCE

June 2022

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PURPOSE

The Maine Justice for Children Task Force (“the Task Force”) is hereby continued as a collaborative, multidisciplinary Task Force to **improve safety, permanency, and well-being for children in the State of Maine child welfare system**. It is anticipated that the work of the Task Force will regularly occur in conjunction and collaboration with the work of the Executive and Legislative Branches, along with appropriate child welfare entities. This collaboration may include joint meetings designed to maximize the experience of the membership of each committee, prevent redundancy, and be respectful of members’ work schedules.



MEMBERSHIP

Chaired by the Chief Justice of the Maine Supreme Judicial Court

- Members include (but are not limited to):
 - Judges and Maine Judicial Branch Staff;
 - The Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child and Family Services;
 - Tribal representatives;
 - Department of Public Safety;
 - Maine Child Welfare Services Ombudsman;
 - Parent Attorney;



MEMBERSHIP

- Guardian ad litem;
- Office of the Attorney General;
- Representatives from domestic violence and sexual assault organizations;
- GLBTQ Legal Advocate;
- Homeless Youth representative;
- Department of Education;
- Department of Corrections; and
- Representatives from the Maine State Legislature.

(A full list of membership can be found in the Justice for Children Task Force Charter)

MEETINGS

- The Justice for Children Task Force meets quarterly.
- Average attendance in 2021 was 33 participants.
- Meetings feature:
 - Agency updates from the Maine Judicial Branch, The Office of Child and Family Services, the Office of the Attorney General, the Maine Child Welfare Advisory Panel, the Child Death and Serious Injury Review Panels, and the Maine Commission on Indigent Legal Services.
 - Presentations on pertinent child welfare topics.
 - Updates on action steps taken on strategic plan initiatives.

- Implementation of a virtual child welfare parent curriculum.
- Race and Equity Data Assessment Project.
- Continuing education for all system stakeholders.
- Interagency data sharing.



STRATEGIC
PLAN

PARENT CURRICULUM

- In August 2020, the Task Force added the development of information sessions for parents involved in the child welfare system to the strategic plan.
- Goal: Offer voluntary classes to parents, focused on understanding child welfare agency processes, court procedures, and suggested best practices for parents to implement in order to be successful throughout the life of a child welfare case. The sessions are led by parents with lived experience in the child welfare system or parents who have navigated multiple systems.

PARENT CURRICULUM

- 2021:
 - Secured funding for The Opportunity Alliance (TOA) to implement a one-year pilot project for *Child Protection 101: For Parents, By Parents*.
 - A work plan was developed, curriculum was outlined, and stakeholders were tasked with creating pre-recorded video segments to be used at all the sessions.

PARENT CURRICULUM: DATA COLLECTION

- **Data Collection:**
 - Pre- and post-parent surveys;
 - Time to permanency;
 - Participation in family visitation;
 - Participation and engagement in reunification services; and
 - Attendance at court proceedings.



RACE AND EQUITY DATA ASSESSMENT

Goals of the Race and Equity Subcommittee

- Assess systemic data collection with regard to race and other important markers of equity;
- Better understand what systems are in place for the collection and sharing of aggregated data on various data points in order to inform policy decisions, measure fairness and equity, and provide the courts and agencies with data about the people and populations they serve.



RACE AND
EQUITY DATA
ASSESSMENT

Project Partners

- The Maine Judicial Branch;
- The Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child and Family Services;
- Department of Corrections;
- Department of Public Safety; and
- Department of Education



RACE AND EQUITY DATA ASSESSMENT

Data Point Set

- Race;
- Ethnicity;
- Connection with tribe/band/nation;
- Enrollment or eligibility for enrollment with a federally recognized tribe(s);
- Sexual orientation;
- Income;
- Location;
- Gender;
- Gender identity; and
- Disability.



RACE AND EQUITY DATA ASSESSMENT

Action Steps

- May 2021: Self- Assessment- an effort to inventory which data are collected, how they are collected, and how those data are coded in the various systems.
- October 2021: Public Consulting Group (PCG) was hired through the RFP process to create a data mapping inventory and produce a final report with findings and recommendations.



RACE AND
EQUITY DATA
ASSESSMENT

Data Mapping Inventory

Generally, the Data Mapping Inventory is designed to provide an overview of the current systems and processes for the collection of the data point set by Project Partners.



RACE AND EQUITY DATA ASSESSMENT

The following inquiries will be answered as to each Project Partner:

- **When** the Project Partners interface with the child welfare system;
- The **key decision points** in the child welfare process made by Project Partners;
- **Which data** from the data point set are currently collected;
- **Opportunities** for data collections;
- **When** data from the data point set are currently collected;
- **How** the data from the data point set are collected; and
- **Availability of data** on the total number of cases and individuals served.



RACE AND
EQUITY DATA
ASSESSMENT

Final Report

- Identify barriers, if any, for collection of data from the data point set;
- Best practices for the collection of data;
- Opportunities, advantages, and disadvantages for interagency aggregated data sharing; and
- A proposed evaluation plan for the collection and possible sharing of aggregated data pertaining to the data point set by the Project Partners.
- To be completed by September 30, 2022.

CONTINUING EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE


- Meets throughout the year to plan the annual Maine Judicial Branch Child Welfare Conference.
- Attendees at the conferences include:
 - Parent's attorneys;
 - Guardians ad litem;
 - Assistant Attorney Generals;
 - DHHS caseworkers;
 - Judges; and
 - Other system stakeholders.



COMMUNICATION
AND
COLLABORATION
WITH OTHER
CITIZEN REVIEW
PANELS


Citizen Review Panels:

- Quarterly meetings with chairs/designees (January 24, 2022/April 25, 2022).
- Attendance at monthly MCWAP and CDSIRP meetings.
- Inter-panel sharing of annual reports and presentation of annual reports at panel meetings.



COMMUNICATION
AND
COLLABORATION
WITH OCFS

- Attendance at MCWAP and CDSIRP (monthly) and JCTF (quarterly);
- Subcommittee meetings with OCFS representation:
 - Race and Equity Data Assessment (monthly);
 - Parent Curriculum (monthly);
 - Continuing Education Subcommittee (monthly);
 - Child Welfare Stakeholder Meeting with MJB, OCFS, AAGs, and MCILS (quarterly); and
 - MCWAP Executive Committee Meeting (monthly).



COMMUNICATION
AND
COLLABORATION
WITH OCFS

Other meetings:

- Program Improvement Plan Meetings (as needed);
- Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA Workgroup) meeting (every-other month);
- CFSR national calls and planning meetings;
- Family First Prevention Services;
- National Judicial Leadership Summit;
- Juvenile Justice Advisory Group; and
- As needed.

QUESTIONS?