



**South Dakota Unified Judicial System
State Court Administrator's Office
Court Improvement Program (CIP)**

<https://uj.s.sd.gov/>



PURPOSE:

The Court Improvement Program is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau, to support the Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act to the state's highest state court of appeals. Grant funds support the state courts' continuous assessment and improvement to the handling of court proceedings related to child welfare and enhance the collaboration with title IV-E/IV-B agencies and tribes.

MISSION:

The Court Improvement Program Committee, through the direction of the South Dakota State Supreme Court, State Court Administrator's Office, will assess the system's handling of child abuse and neglect cases and recommend improvements for achieving timely safety, permanency, and well-being for children and families.

CIP COMMITTEE DUTIES:

- Identify strategic initiatives with the overall goal of achieving timely permanency for children.
- Make recommendations for improvements or enhancements of services, data collection, training, policies, and legislation.
- Support collaboration between the courts, agencies, tribes, and community stakeholders.
- Create educational materials and learning opportunities related to child welfare court proceedings.
- Support efforts to comply with the state and federal statutes.

CIP PROJECTS:

- Creation of and revisions to the South Dakota Guidelines for Child Abuse and Neglect Cases (aka: The Green Book).
- Creation of the Child Abuse and Neglect Attorney Certification Training Video, found at <http://ujstv.sd.gov/>.
- Developed Professional Reference Guides for the legal community and law enforcement.
- Created the Motion and Order to Terminate form.
- Support the state and tribes with Qualified Expert Witness (QEW) trainings.
- Support ongoing training of the judiciary, attorneys, child welfare staff and advocates, and community stakeholders.
- Support the efforts of Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) with CIP grant opportunities, trainings, and data reports.
- Support the efforts of family-dependency treatment court pilot project (Momentum Court) in Codington County.
- Generate the memorandum of understanding (MOU) between CASA, the circuit courts, and SD Department of Social Services – Child Protection Services and ensure the MOU is reviewed, revised as needed and signed at least every three years.
- Collaborate with the SD Department of Social Services on systemic change in child welfare and support the department’s successful completion of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) and the Program Improvement Plan (PIP).
- Collaborate with the Center for the Prevention of Child Maltreatment and Sanford’s Child’s Voice to host and sponsor the “Community Response to Child Abuse” conference.
- Collaborate with other child welfare stakeholders to support community conferences and workshops.

CIP GRANTS:

BASIC - The basic grant enables state courts to conduct assessments of the role, responsibilities, and effectiveness of state courts in carrying out state laws relating to child welfare proceedings. It also allows state courts to make improvements to provide for the safety, well-being, and permanence of children in foster care and assist in the implementation of Program Improvement Plans (PIPs) resulting from the Child and Family Services and title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Reviews.

DATA - The data grant supports state court data collection and analysis and promotes data sharing between state courts, child welfare agencies, and tribes.

TRAINING - The training grant is intended to increase child welfare expertise within the legal community and facilitate cross-training opportunities among agencies, tribes, courts, and other key stakeholders.

CIP COMMITTEE MAKE-UP:

Members:

1. Supreme Court Justice (Justice Scott Myren)
2. Circuit Judge (Judge Gregg Magera)
3. Circuit Judge (Judge Rachel Rasmussen)
4. Circuit Court Administrator (Susan Compaan)
5. State's Attorney's Office (Roxie Erickson, Carrie Mees)
6. Attorney (Lindsey Riter-Rapp)
7. Department of Social Services – Child Protection Services (Pamela Bennet, Sara Sheppick, Eric Grover, Ashley Asmus, Ashley Schlichenmayer-Okroi, Vicki Burger)
8. CASA Representative (Jackie Horton)
9. Tribal/ICWA Representative (Jessica Morson, Deborah “Mickey” Devine)
10. Legislator (Rep. Rebecca Reimer)
11. Law Enforcement (Captain Dustin Morrison)
12. Education (Dr. Michelle Vande Weerd)
13. Community Partner (Tracy Bird, Center for the Prevention of Child Maltreatment)
14. Community Stakeholder-Lived Experience

State Court Administrator Staff: Sara Kelly – CIP Coordinator

Meetings: The committee will meet as needed and determined by the chair.