

Tribal Court State Court Forum (TCSCF)

Quarterly Meeting Summary

12/6/2023

Hosted by State Court at the Annual Judges Conference
Radisson Blu Bloomington

The purpose of the Tribal Court State Court Forum is to enhance tribal court and state court relationships, provide an opportunity to address issues arising from the courts' concurrent jurisdictions, collaborate on development and delivery of judicial education and training, recommend revisions to Minnesota's procedural rules of court, and work on issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries.

1. Welcome, Blessing, and Introductions

The Honorable Lenor Scheffler Blaeser led a welcome and blessing.

Introductions of Forum members and special guests was led by Judge Gaïtas

Agenda and Meeting Summary

The prior minutes were not posted on the website so approval of the September meeting minutes will be delayed. All prior agendas and minutes are now found on the [TCSCF website](#).

2. Creating Historical Books for Tribal Courts

Liz Reppe from the state court law library came to talk about career books. They have always provided a career book of work to judges after they leave the bench. While they do not have the staff to do this for individual Tribal Judges, she said they would be able to do one for each tribe.

Liz also said the law library has long offered research help to district and appellate judges and would like to offer the same to tribal judges. They can be reached at lawclerkhelp@courts.state.mn.us. She said they have been working on a research document for tribal laws in Minnesota. Judge Soule initiated a discussion about a repository for Tribal Court opinions. He said White Earth stopped sending them into LexisNexis about 10 years ago. Judges agreed it would be wonderful to be able to access tribal court opinions in addition to state court opinions.

As a forum, they discussed possibly expanding the TCSCF website to add additional history. Liz has agreed to utilize her law library listserv to see if there are other jurisdictions who have done something similar or have any means of tracking tribal laws and opinions.

3. Report on State-Tribal Partnership Grant

Judy Nord from the Children's Justice Initiative at State Court Administration reported on a grant CJI has received from the Federal Children's Bureau.

4. District Court Notification to Tribal Courts *added item*

This was added as a discussion item at the request of Judge Jones. Discussion included how family and custody orders, among others, can affect the child's relationship to the tribal community. It would be helpful to notify tribal courts when child custody decisions are made for a Native American child in district court. Concerns included the possibility of conflicting orders, along with the child not being allowed at important tribal events and separated from extended family.

5. Updates and Future Plans

A discussion was held on location and topic ideas for the March 2024 meeting. This would be a meeting hosted by a tribal court. Judge Treuer shared that Bois Forte will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of their court in spring 2024 and suggested they'd like to host the June meeting. Future topic ideas included asking Justice Thissen speak about the paralegal program, and Indian Legal Aid.