

CHISAGO COUNTY  
INTENSIVE  
FAMILY COURT PROGRAM



# INTRODUCTION

The following document shall provide a general framework of common principles, policies and practices for the Intensive Family Court Program in Chisago County. The purpose of these standards and policies is to:

- Minimize duplication of efforts and ensure greater coordination.
- Maximize coordination and sharing of resources.
- Strengthen efforts to obtain funding.
- Facilitate coordinated long-range plans for financing the Court.

Developed through a consensus of involved County agencies, the policies include all the elements that are considered essential to the operation of an Intensive Family Court Program in Chisago County, Minnesota. Collectively, they represent a required minimum program model.

The program is intended to reflect the unique needs and operational environment of Chisago County's Court jurisdiction. However, it is clear that there is a need for overall uniformity as to basic components and operational procedures and principles. Therefore, this document is an attempt to outline those fundamental policies to which Chisago County's Intensive Family Court should subscribe.

# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Intensive Family Court Program in Chisago County, Minnesota is an intensive program that utilizes a strength-based approach for families. Individual plans will be constructed for each participant where strengths, competencies, and personal resources can be applied to building solutions to combat the concerns that brought them to the Court's attention. Chisago County Intensive Family Court Program has been specifically designated and staffed to supervise families that have been referred to a comprehensive and judicially monitored program. The program will include a focus on child protection issues. The Intensive Family Court Program therefore must equip participants with life and coping skills and, if necessary, strive to find alternative role models.

# MISSION STATEMENT

Chisago County District Court, in the Tenth Judicial District of Minnesota will provide a Intensive Family Court Program in an effort to reunify families into healthy safe environment. The Intensive Family Court Program provides strength – based interventions promoting healthy lifestyles, accountability for actions, and positive family dynamics.

# GOALS

The Intensive Family Court Program has four primary goals.

## *GOAL # 1: Reunify Families*

**Objective:** Establish a healthy safe environment in which children in need of protection can be reunified with their family members.

## *GOAL # 2: Improve Family Functions*

**Objective:** Strengthen families by improving the capacity of families to promote structure and guidance to their children.

## *GOAL # 3: Promote Safe and Healthy Lifestyles*

**Objective:** Strengthen families by improving the capacity of families to promote safe and healthy lifestyles.

## *GOAL # 4: Reduce Systems Costs*

**Objective:** Address the family's social and economic needs by identifying the needs and strengths of the family and matching them with the appropriate services.

**Objective:** Reduce reliance on social services by providing families with the skills that will aid them in leading safe and productive lives.

# TARGET POPULATION

Target Population (Based on Mission Statement)

- A. Residents of Chisago County with Child Protection issues
- B. Families with a custodial parent who engages in habitual chemical abuse that interfere with their ability to safely parent their children.
- C. Families with a parent who engages in a pattern of habitual domestic abuse.

# ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

## A. Qualifying Factors

1. Family member who is a resident of Chisago County.
2. Family that is subject to a CHIPS proceeding.
3. Family that has been adjudicated CHIPS either by trial or admission.
4. CHIPS Petition based upon chemical abuse or domestic violence. (During the exploratory phase of this specialty court emphasis and preference will be given to CHIPS proceedings involving chemical abuse.)
5. Family members who are able to participate in intervention activities.

## B. Disqualifying Factors

1. Parent who has inflicted bodily harm to a child or neglected a child in a manner that demonstrates a grossly inadequate ability to provide minimally adequate parental care.
2. Parent who has previously had his or her parental rights involuntarily terminated or has had legal custody of a child involuntarily transferred may be disqualified from participation in the Intensive Family Court Program.
3. Medical condition(s) or mental illness which renders all parents incapable of participating in intervention activities.

# PROGRAM ADMISSIONS

## A. Referral

Participants are identified and referred by Health and Human Services, the County Attorney, Public Defender, or private attorney. The Judge can also refer families from the juvenile court docket. The final authority regarding admission into the Intensive Family Court Program is with the District Court Judge. Referrals may be limited by the availability of Health and Human Services and Court Administration resources.

## B. Orientation

The Health and Human Services shall provide each participating parent with an orientation to the Intensive Family Court Program. Participating parents are notified in writing of the time and date. The orientation will include an overview of the Intensive Family Court Program, including an explanation of the role of the court and all participants.

### **C. Assessment**

Upon completion of Orientation and after signing all of the required paperwork, all parties and participants will cooperate in all necessary parenting, chemical dependency and psychological assessments required for the development of a Case Plan.

### **D. Case Plan**

All parties and participants and their attorneys will work with Health and Human Services and the GAL to develop a Case Plan which will outline in detail the expectations for all parties and participant in the.

### **E. Judicial Monitoring and Review**

Once the Case Plan is prepared and agreed upon by all parties and participants, progress will be monitored, reviewed and supervised by the District Court Judge assigned to the case as outlined below. Each case will be blocked to one Judge who will hear the matter until conclusion.

### **F. Reunification**

Reunification will occur when risk of harm to children and safety issues have been addressed.

## **PROGRAM COMPONENTS**

### **A. Description of Phases**

The Intensive Family Court Program shall establish minimum program elements for each phase that include but are not limited to:

<b>Phase I</b> <b>Orientation, Assessment and Intervention</b>
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1. Orientation/Overview of program.
2. Assessment and initial Case Plan development.
3. Review Hearings will be held every 14 days to insure development and understanding of the Case Plan.

***Average Completion 4 weeks***

**Phase II  
Intensive Supervision**

1. Greater emphasis placed on progress of Case Plan.
2. Attention will be devoted to achieving individual and family stability.
3. Efforts will be placed on engaging the family in the process and progress toward reunification.
4. Review Hearings will be held every 21 days to assess cooperation with the Case Plan.

*Average completion 2-3 months*

**Phase III  
Moderate Supervision**

1. Greater emphasis is placed on transitioning to reunification and closure of the case.
2. Ongoing review and updating of Case Plan.
3. Reunification may be possible if the family is fully engaged in the case plan and safety and stability can be assured.
4. Review hearings will be held every 30 days to assess cooperation with the Case Plan.
5. All parents participating in Intensive Supervision shall prepare a "Family Support Plan" prior to advancing to Phase IV. (See Attached Family Support Plan)

*Average completion 4-5 months*

**Phase IV  
Transition**

1. Reunification will have taken place with a greater emphasis on achieving sufficient progress to move toward terminating supervision.
2. Review Hearings will be held every 45 days.

*Average Completion 3-6 months*

**B. Phase Advancement**

Advancement for each phase shall be based upon the progress achieved in completely the case plan as determined by the District Court Judge upon recommendation of Health and Human Services and the GAL.

### **C. Termination**

At any time during the Intensive and Moderate supervision phases the parties and participants, Health and Human Services or the GAL may make recommendation for termination of Intensive Supervision. Termination of Intensive Supervision will rest in the discretion of the District Court Judge assigned to the case.

### **D. Progress Reports**

Health and Human Services and the GAL will be responsible for providing progress reports to the court. All progress reports will identify both negative and positive accomplishments of the family. During the Phases I, II and III reports shall be made orally in open court at each session with written reports being filed with the court every 90 days. During Phase IV written reports will be filed with the court every 90 days. In accordance with the Rules of Juvenile Protection Procedure, all reports shall be filed with the court at least 5 days prior to the scheduled review hearing with oral reports presented in open court to supplement.

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Signature of Parent

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Signature of parent of other adult

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Date

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Date