



## Minnesota Judicial Branch Policy

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| <b>Policy Source:</b>    | Minnesota Judicial Council         |
| <b>Policy Number:</b>    | 601                                |
| <b>Category:</b>         | Court Operations                   |
| <b>Title:</b>            | Children's Justice Policy          |
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| <b>Supersedes:</b>       |                                    |

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### Children's Justice Policy

#### I. POLICY STATEMENT

- A. It is the policy of the Judicial Branch that juvenile protection cases receive docket priority as required under Minn. Stat. § 260C.151, subd. 1, and be expedited in conformance with state and federal requirements with the goal of serving the best interests of children by providing safe, stable, and permanent homes for abused and neglected children. In furtherance of this policy, and in recognition of the complex nature of juvenile protection cases, each District:
- (1) Shall ensure that counties develop and maintain multidisciplinary committees to monitor and advocate for the administration of child protection cases, policies, and procedures;-
  - (2) Shall monitor key outcomes for children in each county in the district as specified in Judicial Council Policy 505a and 505b;
  - (3) Is encouraged to consider policies and practices supportive of improving key outcomes in juvenile protection matters. Examples include:
    - (a) Blocking cases to a single judge from the first hearing through termination of jurisdiction;
    - (b) Establishing judicial rotation assignments of at least three years; and
    - (c) Establishing cross-county or multi-county court practices so as to maximize the ability of rural judges to have the requisite expertise to appropriately preside in matters involving abuse and neglect of children; and
  - (4) Is encouraged to support attendance at initial and continuing education for all judges and court personnel assigned to juvenile protection matters.
- B. The Judicial Council shall annually receive a report regarding each district's results on key outcomes for children in juvenile protection matters as required in State Court

Administrator Policy/Procedure 505(b) (Section VII) and the district's progress in meeting the timing objectives specified in State Court Administrator Policy/Procedure 505(a). The report may be informed by other data helpful to understanding the district's achievements and challenges on the measures and objectives, including federal child welfare measures relevant to achieving timely permanency, the number of children in the district under the guardianship of the commissioner of human services, and the number of children who remain in foster care past 12 months.

## **II. IMPLEMENTATION AUTHORITY**

Implementation of this policy shall be shared between the State Court Administrator, the chief judges of the judicial districts and the Court of Appeals, and the chief justice of the Supreme Court. The chief judges and chief justice shall appoint a lead judge and dedicated administrative staff in each district and appellate court. Each district and its county Children's Justice Initiative (CJI) judges accept shared responsibility for monitoring and improving performance on federal and judicial branch child welfare measures and are encouraged to develop and implement local plans to improve such performance. The State Court Administrator shall consult with the CJI Advisory Committee and the lead judges to develop and promulgate case processing best practices and performance measurements.

## **III. EXECUTIVE LIMITATIONS**

Not applicable.