



## Minnesota Supreme Court Council on Child Protection and Maltreatment Prevention

### Status Report

March 31, 2025

**Council Purpose:** To develop a comprehensive blueprint to improve Minnesota's child protection system that addresses all aspects of the system, including early intervention and prevention of unnecessary entry of children and families into the system.

**Council Members:** The Council is comprised of individuals and organizations specified in the authorizing legislation, [Minn. Laws Chapter 115, Article 12, Section 30](#), as well as others who have a deep understanding of Minnesota's child protection systems' strengths, challenges, and ideas for improvement.

Since the January Status Report, two new members have been appointed: Rebecca St. George, Assistant Commissioner, Child Safety and Permanency, Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), was appointed as an additional Council member, and Cynthia Stoltz, Program Manager, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, was appointed as an additional Council Advisor.



Council Members  
(March 2025)

**Presentations:** The Council held its first meeting in August 2024 and, since then, has typically held three-hour evening meetings twice per month. Since the January 2025 Status Report the Council held three meetings during which it received presentations on and held discussions regarding the following topics:

- Overview of the DCYF 2025 Child Safety and Permanency Legislative Priorities, presented by Rebecca St. George and Marina Balleria
- Child Abuse Prevention, presented by the Minnesota Coalition for Child Abuse Prevention
- Minnesota Child Welfare Funding Sources, presented by John Sellen, Human Services Area Manager, Hennepin County Human Services and Public Health, and Christine Partlow, Director of Finance and Technology, Stearns County Human Services

**Focus Areas:** Based on the presentations and discussions from August 2024 through January 2025, the Council identified the following six focus areas on which to concentrate its blueprint recommendations:

- Maltreatment prevention and intervention
- Child well-being
- Juvenile court practices and procedures
- Social services practices and procedures
- Workforce development and training needs
- Funding systems

**Council Subcommittees:** The Council established a subcommittee for each of the six focus areas. Rather than holding Council meetings in February 2025, instead each subcommittee met separately and held two subcommittee meetings. Using the attached Subcommittee Discussion Guide, the goal of these subcommittee meetings was to brainstorm issues or challenges related to each subcommittee's topic area, including whether each issue or challenge had a regional or statewide impact. Each subcommittee also identified data or research that could be compiled to support each of the identified challenges. If specific data was unknown, in the alternative each subcommittee identified national, state, or local experts or organizations that could be contacted to further understand the specific issue or challenge.



Subcommittee  
Discussion Guide

During the meetings in March 2025, each subcommittee reported to the full Council the list of issues and challenges it had identified. The full Council then had an opportunity to discuss each subcommittee's list of issues and challenges and identify issues or challenges that should be added to or removed from each focus area. Council staff compiled all subcommittee issues and challenges into one list.

**Themes and Solutions for Issues and Challenges:** During meetings to be held in April 2025 the Council will identify overarching themes resulting from the list of issues and challenges. Also during the April meetings, the subcommittees will be placed into breakout sessions to brainstorm promising practices or potential solutions for each of the identified issues or challenges. The subcommittees will also identify counties or other states, if known, that have implemented one or more of the promising practices or solutions. Council staff will follow up with those counties or states to learn more about the promising practice or solutions and invite personnel from some of those locations to share their information during future meetings.

**Roadmap for Focus Groups and Surveys:** During a March 2025 Council meeting, Council staff provided an overview of the Council “Roadmap” – the proposed plan for conducting facilitated focus groups and distributing surveys to gather community input on issues and challenges regarding the child protection and maltreatment prevention systems. The goals of these sessions will be to hear directly from stakeholders regarding (1) the role that community can play in preventing maltreatment, (2) perceived strengths and weaknesses of Minnesota’s current child protection and maltreatment prevention systems, and (3) ideas for promising practices or potential solutions to issues with the various systems.

The Council will use the focus group and survey feedback to develop and refine its blueprint for improving the child protection and maltreatment prevention systems.



Roadmap (March  
2025)

**Confidentiality Order:** As more specifically identified in the Roadmap, participants for the focus group sessions will be engaged with attention toward geographic, racial, and gender diversity and will include both individuals and organizations. Focus group input will be sought from parents and youth with lived child protection system experience and from professionals who work in the child protection system.

To encourage focus group and survey participation of parents, youth, and professionals, the Supreme Court issued an order precluding access to confidential focus group and survey information:

“To ensure the anonymity of the individuals who respond to the Council surveys and who participate in focus groups, and to increase the likelihood of candid and honest responses, anything in the Council focus group discussions and survey responses that could be used to identify the survey respondents and focus group participants shall be confidential. Similarly, because the purpose of the surveys and focus groups is to assess Minnesota’s child protection system and identify ways it could be improved, not to focus on individuals or specific cases, records from the Council surveys and focus groups that identify specific court cases, parties and participants, court personnel, judges, litigants, attorneys, or other individuals participating in court cases shall be confidential.”



Order Regarding  
Access to Confidential