Minnesota Supreme Court Council on Child Protection and Maltreatment Prevention

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To ensure that children who have experienced abuse and neglect attain safe, stable, permanent homes and improved well-being.

CJI Mission Statement

Legislation and Supreme Court Order

- Authorizing Legislation
 May 2024
- Supreme Court Order August 2024
- Part of Minnesota's Court Improvement Program known as the Children's Justice Initiative



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Council Purpose

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 To develop a comprehensive blueprint to improve Minnesota's child protection system and prevent unnecessary entry of children and families into the system

Council Structure - Membership

- Statewide, multidisciplinary membership
- Parents and youth with lived experience, judges, county attorneys, attorneys for parents and children, guardians ad litem, social workers, tribal representatives



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Council Structure – Membership (cont'd)

 Law enforcement officers, pediatricians, foster youth ombudsperson, peer recovery specialists, youth life coaches, county commissioner, educators, chemical health and mental health services providers for adults and children



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Council Structure - Meetings

- Timeframe: Council meets from August 2024 through January 2026
- Evening meetings held twice per month for three hours per meeting

 15 Council meetings held so far



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Focus on Children



- Preventing child abuse and neglect
- Preventing unnecessary entry of children and families into the system
- Improving existing child protection system

Initial Presentations to Council

- Presentations on key topics to ensure all Council members fully understand scope of child welfare system, social services processes, and court process
- Examined prevention, early intervention, removal, reunification, and permanency



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- Council discussions following each of the presentations resulted in identification of issues, concerns, and challenges
- 12 pages of concerns more will be identified through focus groups and surveys

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Examples of Concerns

- Communities need to be involved in maltreatment prevention efforts
- Children moved from school to school or foster placement to foster placement
- Not enough court hearing time to fully discuss critical issues
 SSIS coversity outdated
- \odot SSIS severely outdated

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Examples of Concerns – Workforce Issues

 Lack of people to do the work (social workers, attorneys, mental health and chemical health service providers)
 Significant turnover in many

sectors – social workers,

attorneys

 Inconsistent or lack of training across all stakeholder groups

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Examples of Concerns – Funding

 Property taxes shouldn't be
 the main source of funding for
 child protection
 Variation in county property
 tax bases result in unequal
 treatment of children and
 families across counties



- Examples of Concerns Lack of Resources, including:
 - Services to help families who are doing their best to protect their children
 - Affordable, stable housing for many low-income families
 - Help for single parents who can't afford daycare
 - Mental health and chemical health treatment facilities

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Six Focus Areas

- Issues, concerns and challenges were organized into six key focus areas
 - \circ Maltreatment prevention
 - \circ Child well-being
 - Court processes and procedures
 - Social services processes and procedures
 - \circ Workforce development

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 \circ Funding systems



Exploring Promising Practices and Potential Solutions

- Solutions: Prevention of Maltreatment
 - Family Resource
 Centers
 - Involvement of the community
 - Supportive living environments for families
 - Hospital to home programs



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Exploring Promising Practices and Potential Solutions

- Solutions: Improving the Child Protection System
 - Consistent high-quality training for all stakeholders
 - Define parent and party/participant in court process
 - Ensure early legal representation for parents and children
 - Resources for foster youth aging out of the system

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Focus Groups



- In process of convening focus groups to gather information from communities and validate existing and identify any additional:

 issues, concerns, and challenges
 promising practices and
- potential solutions
 Geographic, racial, gender diversity

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Focus Groups - Categories



• 16 focus groups

- Tribal communities
- Cultural community leaders
 (Black/African American, Latino, Asian Pacific)
- Religious and spiritual community leaders
- $\,\circ\,$ Foster parents and providers
- Law enforcement
- Parents and youth with lived child protection experience
- Youth-serving organizations
- Social workers
- \circ GALs

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• Mandated reporters

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Focus Groups - Questions



- Questions similar for each group
 - What could be done to help prevent child maltreatment and prevent families from entering the child protection system?
 - What improvements are needed in the child protection system?
 - What are the strengths of the system?
 - What in the system could be improved?
 - Thinking back to the training you received, was it sufficient? What additional training should be implemented?

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Surveys to Community at Large

- Surveys will be sent to 15

 constituency groups statewide

 County commissioners
 Social services directors
 Social workers
 Mental health and chemical
 - health treatment providers
 Judges
 - County attorneys
 - Attorneys for parents and children

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- \circ Court administration
- Guardians ad litem



Surveys to Community at Large (cont'd)

- In the surveys, constituents will be asked to rate their level of agreement with identified challenges and solutions
- Opportunity to add other challenges and solutions



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Updates and Reports



- Status Updates

 January 2025
 March 2025
- Progress Report: July 15, 2025
- Final Report: January 15, 2026

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Questions



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