

**Meeting Summary**  
**Tribal Court State Court Forum (TCSCF)**  
**Friday, July 16, 2021**  
**(via Zoom)**

*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.*

[Link to TCSCF website](#)

**Tribal Court Co-Chairs: Hon. Chris Anderson and Hon. Vanya Hogen**  
**State Court Co-Chairs: Hon. Lucinda Jesson and Hon. Sally Tarnowski**

### **Blessing and Welcome**

The meeting began with a blessing from Leech Lake Tribal Court Chief Judge, Paul Day, and was followed by a welcome from TCSCF Tribal Court Co-Chair, Judge Vanya Hogen. Introductions were made by forum members as well as from special guests who were in attendance.

### **Review and approve March 19, 2021 Meeting Summary**



Meeting Summary -  
TCSC Forum 3-19-21

Approved without change.

### **Understanding the Native American Children's Safety Act**

**Panel Discussion:** The [Native American Children's Safety Act](#) - What it means in terms of background checks and the impact it has on tribes and states.

- **Facilitator:** *Hon. Tanya Bransford, Hennepin County District Court*
- **Tribal Court Representative:** *Hon. BJ Jones, Leech Lake Tribal Court of Appeals, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Tribal Court, Chief Judge of Prairie Island Indian Community Tribal Court, and White Earth Nation Tribal Court*
- **State Court Representative:** *Hon. Stephen Smith, Ramsey County District Court*
- **DHS Representative:** *Ms. Jill Roberts, Integrated Policy and Planning Manager, Background Studies Division, Minnesota Department of Human Services*
- **DHS Representative:** *Ms. Catherine ("Katie") Ryan, Background Studies Legal Manager, Legal Counsel's Office, Minnesota Department of Human Services Office of Inspector General*



nacsa.pptx

In conversation with forum members and special guests, the panelists above discussed the Native American Children's Safety Act. As part of that conversation, they discussed whether tribes should reach out through counties or directly contact the MN Department of Human Services (DHS) with questions or concerns and whether this topic could be part of a master tribal agreement with DHS. Some follow-up conversations will occur between the tribes and DHS to explore the possibility of doing such a "master agreement." Forum members and special guests agreed they wanted to request some demographic information from DHS about who is denied foster care licensure placement based on maltreatment findings. CJI Staff Attorney, Rebecca Vanden Hanen, will follow-up with panelist Katie Ryan to make that request.

There was consensus among the group to continue this important conversation and add the Native American Children's Safety Act to the draft agenda for October. A suggestion was made to explore whether the Children's Justice Initiative (CJI) – through the ICWA Subcommittee of the Advisory Committee or its other programming might engage in this same conversation and work. CJI Staff Attorney, Rebecca Vanden Hanen, will follow-up with her CJI teammates about opportunities for collaboration in that regard.

### **Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA): What Judges Should Know as MN Nears Full Implementation in September of 2021**



FFPSA Overview for  
TCSCF - July 2021

CJI Staff Attorney, Rebecca Vanden Hanen, shared an overview of the [FFPSA](#) and its impact on juvenile court proceedings in state court and in tribal court for the three initiative tribes, Leech Lake, White Earth, and Red Lake Nation. There was some discussion about what TCSCF members and interested parties can expect in the months ahead and how to prepare. As part of that conversation, the group discussed more detailed training opportunities coming in September for state court judges, tribal court judges, and other special guests. The Minnesota Judicial Branch will continue to communicate important information about FFPSA implementation and training / resource tools associated with it through its internal and external communication channels.

### **Update from CJI ICWA Subcommittee**

CJI Staff Attorney, Rebecca Vanden Hanen, shared an update with the group from Minnesota Supreme Court Justice, Anne McKeig, about the efforts of the CJI ICWA Subcommittee, which is busy planning another ICWA Summit to bring together about 150 professionals from the 6 active ICWA courts as well as tribal partners. It will be in November and is the second of what they hope will be an annual Summit. At the same time, the Subcommittee is also working on implementing the recommendations from the last Summit.

It was noted that legislation was successfully passed that waives tribal filing fees in child welfare proceedings.

It was also noted that the ICWA Subcommittee also continues to work on the topic of ICWA training and making sure that the 3 main providers throughout the State of Minnesota are on the same page.

## Updates & Future Plans

- Forum members and interested parties discussed and agreed to include the following topics on the next TCSCF meeting agenda:
  - Continued conversation regarding the Native American Children's Safety Act. Tribal Court Judge BJ Jones, State Court Judge Stephen Smith, and a representative from DHS will continue the conversation from today and share an update at the next meeting.
  - A presentation on child welfare reform issues from Dr. Amelia Franck Meyer, the Chief Executive Officer of Alia.
- TCSCF Co-Chairs invited anyone interested in hosting a future meeting or suggesting an agenda item to let them know.

## Closing Remarks / Announcements

State Court Co-Chair Lucinda ("Cindy") Jesson shared with the group that this was her last meeting as State Court Co-Chair. As part of her announcement, she welcomed, Judge Denise Reilly as the new State Court Co-Chair who would be taking her place.

State Court Co-Chair Judge Sally Tarnowski and Tribal Court Co-Chair Judge Vanya Hogen commended Judge Jesson on her service and leadership to the group and presented her with a Certificate of Appreciation signed by the state court Chief Justice.

The group wished Judge Jesson well, thanked her for her service and leadership, and welcomed Judge Reilly into her new role.

## Trainings, Conferences, Other Outreach

- [CJI CWA Trainings](#) (temporarily postponed due to COVID-19):
  - Minneapolis (date TBD)
  - St. Paul (date TBD)
  - Duluth (date TBD)
  - Bemidji (date TBD)

To request virtual, targeted CJI ICWA training in your area while in-person trainings are temporarily postponed due to COVID-19, please [contact the CJI](#).

- National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) events:
  - [Positive Indian Parenting](#): August 9-12, 2021; September 20-23, 2021; and November 1-4, 2021 (online events)
  - [Working with Substance-Abusing Families](#): September 15-17, 2021 (online event)
  - [Enhancing Basic Skills](#): October 5-6, 2021 (online event)

## Future Meeting Dates

- **October 8, 2021** – Tribal Court Host TBD
- **December 2021** - State Court Host: Annual Conference of Judges Breakfast Meeting (date TBD)

**Meeting Adjourned.**