

The Supreme Court of Ohio

OPERATING GUIDELINES FOR THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

These guidelines are issued by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and apply to the creation, organization, and operation of the Advisory Committee on Children and Families to assist the Court in exercising the authority granted pursuant to Article IV of the Ohio Constitution.

These guidelines are intended to establish consistent standards and expectations in implementing this authority. While these guidelines may impose specific duties upon other persons, the Chief Justice may waive compliance with any guidelines to assist the exercise of that discretion.

These guidelines have not been adopted as rules pursuant to Article IV, Section 5 of the Ohio Constitution and should not be construed as requiring adoption.

SECTION 1. GENERAL GUIDELINES.

1.01. Creation.

There is hereby created by the Chief Justice the Advisory Committee on Children and Families.

1.02. Duties and Authority.

(A) Duties

The advisory committee shall provide ongoing advice to the Court and its staff regarding all of the following:

- (1) The promotion of statewide rules and uniform standards concerning the establishment and operation of programs for children and families in Ohio courts;
- (2) The development and delivery of services to Ohio courts on matters involving children and families, including education programs for judges and court personnel;
- (3) The consideration of any other issues the advisory committee deems necessary to assist the Court and its staff regarding children and families in Ohio courts.

(B) Authority

The advisory committee has no independent policy-setting authority.

SECTION 2. MEMBERSHIP.

2.01. Appointments.

The advisory committee consists of no more than twenty-four members appointed by the Chief Justice. The advisory committee and other interested parties may recommend to the Chief Justice persons for appointment who they believe will serve the purpose for which the advisory committee was created.

2.02. Qualifications.

Each advisory committee member shall have experience or an interest in matters involving children and families in Ohio courts.

2.03. Composition.

Advisory committee membership should be broad-based and multi-disciplinary to represent a cross section of interests related to the issues of children and families in the courts and reflect the gender, racial, ethnic, and geographic diversity of Ohio.

SECTION 3. TERMS AND VACANCIES.

3.01. Terms.

The term of an advisory committee member is three years, provided that an initial appointment may be abbreviated and staggered to allow for a rotation of members. An advisory committee member is eligible for reappointment, but shall not serve more than three consecutive full terms. An advisory committee member is eligible for reappointment after serving three consecutive full terms, but only upon at least a one-year break in service.

3.02. Change of Position, Employment, Affiliation, or Status.

Each advisory committee member appointed because of the member's elected position, official position, employment, organizational affiliation, or other status ceases to be a member at such time the member no longer holds that position, employment, affiliation, or status.

3.03. Filling of Vacancies.

Vacancies on the advisory committee shall be filled in the same manner as original appointments. An advisory committee member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring prior to the expiration of the term for which the member's predecessor was appointed holds office for the remainder of that term.

SECTION 4. OFFICERS AND STAFF.

4.01. Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson.

The Chief Justice shall appoint one advisory committee member to serve as the chairperson and one member to serve as the vice-chairperson. The term of a chairperson and vice-chairperson is one year. A chairperson and vice-chairperson shall not serve more than six consecutive full terms.

4.02. Staff Liaison.

The Administrative Director of the Court shall assign one or more Court employees as may be necessary to serve as staff liaison to the advisory committee. The staff liaison assists the advisory committee as necessary in the implementation of its work, but at all times is considered an employee of the Court.

SECTION 5. MEETINGS.

5.01. Manner.

The advisory committee may meet in person or by telephone or other electronic means available to the Court.

5.02. Frequency.

The advisory committee shall meet as often as required to complete its work, provided the advisory committee shall meet a minimum of two times per year. The advisory committee may meet at the call of the chairperson or at the request of a majority of the advisory committee members.

5.03. Scheduling.

All advisory committee meetings shall be scheduled for a time and place so as to minimize costs to the Court and to be accessible to advisory committee members, Court staff, and the public.

5.04. Public Notice and Attendance.

(A) Notice

Public notice of all advisory committee meetings shall be provided on the Court's website.

(B) Attendance

All advisory committee meetings shall be open to the public.

5.05. Member Attendance.

(A) Requirement

For a fully effective advisory committee, an advisory committee member shall make a good faith effort to attend, in person, each advisory committee meeting.

(B) Participation by telephone or other electronic means

An advisory committee member who is unable to attend a meeting due to an unavoidable conflict may request the chairperson allow the member to participate by telephone or other electronic means available to the Court. An advisory committee member participating in this manner is considered present for meeting attendance, quorum, and voting purposes.

(C) Replacement designee

An advisory committee member may not designate a replacement for participation in or voting at meetings.

(D) Nonattendance

If an advisory committee member misses three consecutive meetings, the chairperson or staff liaison may recommend to the Chief Justice that the member relinquish the member's position on the advisory committee.

5.06. Minutes.

Minutes shall be kept at every advisory committee meeting and distributed to the advisory committee members for review prior to and approval at the next meeting.

5.07. Quorum.

A quorum exists when a majority of advisory committee members is present for the meeting, including those members participating by telephone or other electronic means.

5.08. Actions.

At any advisory committee meeting at which a quorum is present, the advisory committee members may take action by affirmative vote of a majority of the members in attendance.

SECTION 6. SUBCOMMITTEES.

6.01. Creation.

The advisory committee may form such subcommittees it believes necessary to complete the work of the advisory committee. A subcommittee should consist of select advisory committee members and other persons who the chairperson believes will assist in a full exploration of the issue under the review of the subcommittee.

6.02. Size.

A subcommittee should remain relatively small in size and have a ratio of advisory committee members to non-advisory committee members not exceeding one to three.

6.03. Application of Guidelines.

Guidelines 4.02, 5.01, 5.03, 5.04(B), 5.07, 5.08, 7.01, and 7.03 through 7.06 apply to the work and non-advisory committee members of a subcommittee.

SECTION 7. MISCELLANEOUS GUIDELINES.

7.01. Code of Ethics.

An advisory committee member shall comply with the requirements of the Court's *Code of Ethics for Court Appointees*. The staff liaison shall provide each advisory committee member with a copy of the code following the member's appointment to the advisory committee and thereafter at the first meeting each year of the advisory committee.

7.02. Annual Report.

By January 31st of each year, the chairperson, with the assistance of the staff liaison, shall prepare a report for the Chief Justice and the Administrative Director of the Court detailing the activities and accomplishments of the advisory committee during the previous calendar year and the anticipated activities of the advisory committee during the upcoming calendar year. The staff liaison shall submit the report to the Administrative Director for distribution to the Chief Justice and publication on the Court's website.

7.03. Work Product.

The work product of the advisory committee is the property of the Court.

7.04. Budget.

The budget of the advisory committee is set by the Court through its internal budget process and as implemented by the Court office, section, or program through which the advisory committee operates. The advisory committee has no authority to set its own budget.

7.05. Compensation.

An advisory committee member serves without compensation.

7.06. Reimbursement of Expenses.

An advisory committee member shall be reimbursed for expenses incurred in service to the advisory committee as permitted by the Court's *Guidelines for Travel by Court Appointees*.

7.07. Dissolution.

The Chief Justice may dissolve the advisory committee at any time solely upon the discretion of the Chief Justice or upon the recommendation of the advisory committee indicating the advisory committee is no longer productive or has met the purpose for which it was created.

Effective Date: February 1, 2011

Amended: December 1, 2013; September 8, 2014