

[date]

PROPOSED MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Presiding Judges  
Trial Court Administrators

**FROM:** [insert name here]

**RE:** Allocation of Judicial Resources for Juvenile Cases

In 2015 the Oregon Legislature created the Task Force on Legal Representation in Childhood Dependency, chaired by Justice David Brewer. In its final report, the Task Force recommended further research be conducted to determine whether courts have sufficient judicial resources for juvenile cases, and that measures be taken to ensure Oregon courts allocate sufficient resources to juvenile cases.

We were fortunate to have worked with the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) on an in-depth study of juvenile dependency cases and workload in the Oregon circuit courts, the final report of which is attached. Now that we have the information needed in order to make informed decisions about allocation of judicial resources, I'm asking each Presiding Judge to review the study to determine whether the allocation of judicial resources in your juvenile courts is in line with the report.

The NCSC set out a proportional distribution of current resources spread out among all case types, for each judicial district. Table G-2 on page 30 of the report, provides the amount of judicial FTE courts should allocate to juvenile cases considering existing resources and caseloads.

In addition, I want to make you aware that the NCSC recommended that the OJD increase the judicial time spent on dependency cases by 50 minutes per case to allow judges additional in-court time to implement best practices and off-bench time to prepare for hearings and complete post-hearing work. This additional 50 minutes per case is above and beyond the FTE recommended in Table G-2, and may require additional FTE to implement. Implementing this best practice would require a full time dependency judge for every 210 annual dependency filings. I encourage you to carefully consider how you might move your judicial district to achieving this goal.

I am well aware that the NCSC's best practice recommendation is an ambitious goal, but I believe that, given its importance to ensuring the safety of children in foster care, it is one well worth pursuing. For that reason I have asked the Legislature for new three statewide dependency referee positions intended to assist in implementing the NCSC recommendations.

I greatly appreciate your difficult work in determining how to balance the competing demands of various types of cases, and your continued dedication to ensuring that our juvenile courts have the capacity to ensure safety, permanency, and well-being for Oregon's most vulnerable children.



NCSC Judicial  
Workload Study

Attachment: *Oregon Circuit Court Judicial Officer Workload Assessment Study, 2016*

DRAFT