

**Juvenile Justice Reform Implementation
Report of the Louisiana Supreme Court
October 17, 2003**

Supreme Court administrative staff members have identified and organized the Juvenile Justice Reform recommendations enumerated in Act 1225 and HCR 56 relative to the judicial branch. The following recommendations have been approved by the Justices at administrative conference:

- The Judicial Council requested and the Court approved the creation of a Task Force to Study the Specialization of Family and Juvenile Courts (HCR 56 at p. 10) and the Expansion of the Role of Hearing Officers and of Diversionary Processes (HCR 56 at p. 12). Appointments to the Task Force are currently being made.
- Administrative staff recommended that initiatives relative to judicial training (HCR 56 at p. 11), pro bono attorney recruitment (HCR 56 at p. 12), youth representation (HCR 56 at p. 7) and tandem pay supplements and certification training (HCR 56 at p. 10) be managed as interrelated efforts to provide greater competency and efficiency in juvenile court proceedings. The Court has already ordered and overseen the implementation of the mandatory training of all judges having juvenile jurisdiction with respect to the waiver of counsel issue. It previously ordered and supervised mandatory training of all judges having juvenile jurisdiction in ASFA requirements. The Court has also approved the staff's development of specific programs to improve legal representation in juvenile matters, as requested by the reform legislation. Once developed, these program suggestions will be submitted to the Court for approval and further action.
- The recommendations relative to ASFA compliance (HCR 56 at p. 10) and support for CASA (HCR 56 at p. 10) are already being implemented by administrative staff. The Court has approved continuation of these efforts with periodic progress reports to the Court and to the Commission.
- Efforts responsive to the recommendation for an Integrated Juvenile Justice Information System (HCR 56 at p. 9) are underway through a partnership led by the Children's Cabinet and including the Court and other state and local entities. A grant award was recently made by the Technology Innovation Fund to continue development of the IJIS. The Court has been and continues to be engaged in ongoing technological research and development, including specific software development for juvenile programs.

- The Commission recommendation for Family-friendly Information Services (HCR 56 at p. 11) is an extension of existing work by administrative staff. Many instructional and informational materials have been developed to improve and enhance the quality of juvenile proceedings, and plans have been underway to expand these efforts. The Court has approved continuing these efforts with particular consideration given to the recommendation urged in HCR 56.
- Coordination between Juvenile Justice Reform and the Juvenile and Family Rules Committees (HCR 56 at p. 10) is already available through administrative staff coordination. The Court has approved continuation with progress to be reported to the Court and the Commission.
- The recommendations relative to best practices guidelines for delay reduction (HCR 56 at p. 11) and case management in juvenile cases (HCR 56 at p. 12) are consistent with current Court Improvement Program, FINS Assistance Program, Judicial Council delay reduction, and juvenile court uniform rules work in progress. The Court has approved continued research and development of best practices and work toward creation of a Best Practices Guide.

A number of judges have volunteered to assist the Juvenile Justice Reform Initiative, and the Court plans to utilize their experience and expertise in its efforts to implement the recommendations of the Juvenile Justice Commission.