

# Ohio Family Court Bulletin

Winter 2001

---

---

## Advocating for the Child's Best Interest in Family Court

Melanie Bozynski, Research Assistant, NCJJ  
Jackie McCubbin, Executive Director, Ohio CASA/GAL Association

---

### *History of GALs/CASAs*

---

Ensuring that the best interests of children are effectively and independently represented in child protection proceedings and determining the best mechanism for achieving these goals are increasingly complex and salient issues. In particular, research has identified and assessed the appropriate roles and responsibilities of guardians *ad litem* (GALs) in such cases. The court appointed special advocate (CASA) movement, which introduced the use of trained community volunteers as advocates for abused and neglected children, provides an additional mechanism to ensure that a dependent child's needs are given appropriate attention in decisions made by the court.

The concept of guardian *ad litem* dates back to English common law when courts assigned GALs to represent the best interests of children because they were viewed as lacking in "considered judgement" or unable to express a reasoned choice about issues before the court. Courts have also appointed GALs to protect the rights of older individuals with limited mental capacity and infants in court proceedings.

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) of 1974, the first comprehensive federal child abuse prevention and treatment legislation, prompted the widespread use of GALs in dependency proceedings in the United States (Black, 2000). CAPTA required states to legislatively mandate the appointment of GALs in civil and criminal child protection proceedings as a prerequisite for receiving child abuse prevention and treatment funds (Black, 2000).

Judge David Soukup, a King County Superior Court judge in Seattle, WA, desired more complete and accurate information

(Black, 2000). He began experimenting with using volunteers from the community as GALs instead of attorneys, introducing the idea of court appointed special advocates (CASAs) in 1977. CASAs are generally able to devote more time to a child because they usually only work with one family at a time and are more cost-effective than attorneys. In 1998, there were 843 CASA/GAL programs with 47,107 volunteers in the country (NCASAA, 1998).

CASAs/GALs act as:

- **Fact-Finders**, thoroughly researching and determining the relevant facts of the child's circumstances;
- **Reporters**, ensuring that the relevant facts and recommendations are provided in writing to the court for hearings;
- **Advocates and Guardians *ad litem***, focusing recommendations and actions to ensure that the child's best interests are met; and
- **Case Monitors**, seeing that the court's orders are carried out, planned services are provided, and that the court is informed of new case developments.

---

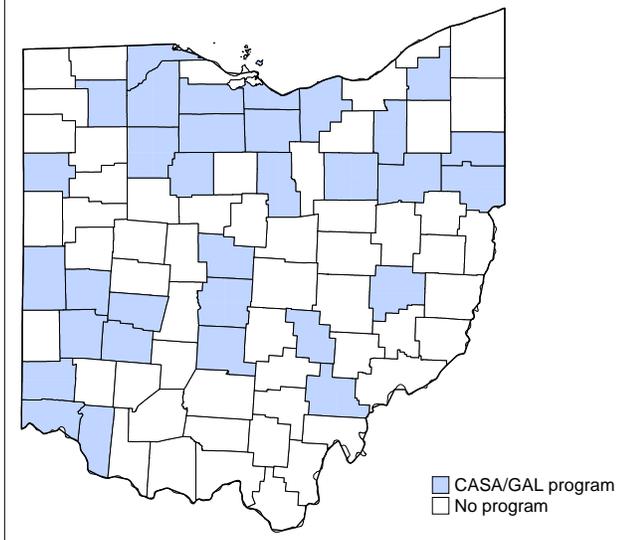
### *CASAs/GALs in Ohio*

---

Because CAPTA did not define the GALs' roles and responsibilities, states passed their own legislation providing for GALs and specifying their roles and responsibilities. Ohio state law (Ohio Revised Code section 2151.281) requires courts to appoint GALs in proceedings concerning:

- an alleged abused or neglected child;
- an alleged or adjudicated delinquent or unruly child who has no parent, guardian, or legal custodian;

## Location of Ohio CASA/GAL Programs



- an alleged or adjudicated delinquent or unruly child when the court finds a conflict of interest between the child and the child's parent, guardian, or legal custodian; or
- parents who are mentally incompetent or younger than 18 years old in a proceeding concerning an alleged or adjudicated delinquent, unruly, abused, neglected, or dependent child.

In Ohio, CASAs and GALs share the same Order of Appointment from the court and the same legal mandates. Ohio's local CASA/GAL programs vary greatly in structure and resources. In many counties, CASAs serve as GALs. In others, attorneys are appointed as guardians *ad litem* and work with CASA volunteers. Ohio has programs that are:

- court-based;
- court-based with a non-profit status;
- independent non-profit corporations;
- under the umbrella of a larger non-profit organization; and
- contracted by a government entity.

Program staff sizes range from a program with a part-time director to a program with 11 staff. The smallest programs have 6 to 10 volunteers while programs in metropolitan areas have up to 180 volunteers. Annual program budgets vary from \$24,000 to over \$500,000.

---

### *Ohio CASA/GAL Association*

---

The Ohio CASA/GAL Association consists of a state office in Columbus and a network of 30 local programs operating in 32 counties. (See Ohio map). The organization recruits, screens, trains, and supervises volunteers to advocate for

abused, neglected, and dependent children in the court system. In 1999, Ohio's court system appointed over 1,400 CASA/GAL volunteers as guardians *ad litem* to 5,500 children.

---

### *Standards Effort*

---

The National CASA Association (NCASAA) first issued standards for CASA programs in 1990 and updated them in 1997. The standards cover a variety of topics, including program mission and purpose, program governance, volunteer management, human resources management, and state affiliation (NCASAA, 1997). (See sidebar below). NCASAA also produces standard volunteer training curricula and is currently testing an updated version in the field.

The Ohio CASA/GAL Association and its local programs are committed to implementing the revised national standards. Directors of local programs, Ohio CASA/GAL Association board members, and staff serve on the Ohio CASA/GAL Association's Standards Committee. The committee developed and continues to lead a five-year implementation plan while helping local programs attain the highest compliance levels. To support the flexibility of local programs, the Standards Committee requested and considered a great deal of local input. The Ohio CASA/GAL Association suggests that local programs implement the standards in phases, starting with standards that address critical and fundamental issues, such as having a mission statement. These standards are considered the minimum standards. Programs that implement the minimum standards and over 75% of the remaining standards will be certified.

### **National CASA Association Standards for Member Programs**

In 1997, the National CASA Association approved updated standards for their member programs (NCASAA, 1997). To download these standards, go to [www.casanet.org/program-services/guides/index.htm](http://www.casanet.org/program-services/guides/index.htm). These standards address:

- Program Mission and Purpose
- Program Governance
- Program Development and Implementation
- Graphics
- National Affiliation
- State Affiliation
- Human Resources Management
- Volunteer Management
- Financial, Facility, and Risk Management
- Public Relations
- Planning and Evaluation
- Record Keeping

---

## *Technical Assistance*

---

As part of the implementation of standards, technical assistance is provided to help programs fully understand and achieve compliance. Technical assistance efforts have included staff and volunteer training, development of model policies, and facilitating the cross-program sharing of best practices. The Ohio CASA/GAL Association is currently completing on-site reviews of each program in order to provide individualized technical assistance and to verify record and document compliance with identified minimum standards.

---

## *Ohio CASA/GAL Association to Offer Startup Funds*

---

The Ohio CASA/GAL Association will be sending materials and applications to interested parties and courts regarding starting a CASA/GAL program in February 2001. Startup funds of up to \$15,000 will be awarded to new programs demonstrating court and community commitment to establishing and supporting a CASA/GAL program. Awards for startup funds will be competitive, and a panel of current Ohio CASA/GAL Association board members and staff and local CASA/GAL program directors will select recipients. All juvenile courts in counties without a CASA/GAL program will receive the application packet. Others interested in starting a program should contact the Ohio CASA/GAL Association at (800) 891-6446 or [ohiocasa@ohiocasa.org](mailto:ohiocasa@ohiocasa.org) to be added to the application mailing list.

For more information about the Ohio CASA/GAL Association, its member programs, or standards implementation, call (614) 224-2272 or visit the web site at [www.ohiocasa.org](http://www.ohiocasa.org). The National CASA Association's web site for CASA and GAL program staff ([www.casenet.org](http://www.casenet.org)) also contains information on the standards. Recruiting volunteers is one of the biggest challenges for volunteer GAL/CASA programs. Energize Inc. provides on-line resources on developing recruitment strategies via its web site at [www.energizeinc.com](http://www.energizeinc.com).

---

## *Effectiveness of CASA Programs*

---

Although efforts to formally document the effectiveness of court appointed special advocate programs have increased in recent years, the literature on such evaluations is relatively sparse. Researchers have conducted more than 20 studies since the mid-1980s; however, the methodologies, very small sample sizes, and/or data concerns have limited the generalizability of study findings and their ability to clearly document the efficacy of using CASAs to advocate for children in child protection cases. While not uniform in their findings, most of these studies have identified some benefits to using CASAs, including (Bozynski, 2000):

- CASAs perform at least as well as, if not considerably better than, attorneys in advocating for a child's best interests (CSR, 1988; CRS, 1995; Snyder, Downing, & Jacobson, 1995);
- Responses from interviews and survey questionnaires indicate that most parties to dependency proceedings view CASAs in a positive light and deem them valuable additions to the court process (Rubio & Jones, 1999; Berliner, 1998; Erny, 1994; Dameron, Brown, Ortloff, & Roberts, 1995; Bogle, 1996; National Center for State Courts, 1988; Snyder, Downing, & Jacobson, 1995). Judges in particular tend to be very supportive of CASA volunteers and give significant weight to their reports and recommendations.
- CASA volunteers spend a considerable amount of time meeting with children, parents, and other key parties; preparing reports/recommendations for the court; attending court hearings; and, in general, advocating for the child's best interests (CSR, 1988; CSR, 1995; Snyder, Downing, & Jacobson, 1996).
- Depending on the study and its focus, cases assigned to CASAs proceed through the court process in a more timely manner (Snyder, Downing, & Jacobson, 1996; Litzelfelner, undated); and
- In the limited number of cases examined, cases in which CASAs are assigned often perform better on intermediary measures, such as quantity of services provided to children and their families and positive

### **Celebrate Kids! License Plates**

Proceeds from the "Celebrate Kids!" specialty license plates provide financial support for the Ohio CASA/GAL Association and local CASA/GAL programs. Ohio programs that comply with National CASA's minimum standards will continue to receive "Celebrate Kids!" funds.

Now available at your local BMW Registrar's Office or by calling 1-888-PLATES3.



case plan changes, and case outcome measures, such as more likelihood of adoptions and less use of long-term foster care (Abramson, 1991; Litzelfelner, undated; CSR, 1988; Poertner & Press, 1990).

---

### *CASAs in Family Courts*

---

Traditionally, guardians *ad litem* and court appointed special advocates have advocated for and protected the best interests of children in dependency proceedings. However, a limited number of courts have assigned CASAs in other types of cases, specifically divorce and custody cases. NCASAA's Board adopted a resolution regarding this issue in 1999 (NCASAA, 1999). This resolution states that while the primary mission of CASA programs should be advocating for abused and neglected children in child protection proceedings, local programs can appoint CASA volunteers in private custody disputes in which abuse or neglect are potential issues. The resolution also states that:

Once a National CASA member program has evaluated its ability to fulfill the primary CASA mission, that program is not prohibited from choosing to provide child advocacy in private child custody disputes where there are issues of abuse or neglect. As a condition of affiliation with National CASA, such programs must demonstrate that volunteers doing this work are receiving supervision, the core CASA training, and additional training in order to handle these cases with the equivalent level of expertise expected of CASA and guardian ad litem volunteers in child protection abuse and neglect cases in juvenile court (NCASAA, 1999).

Some programs in Ohio appoint volunteers to represent children in divorce cases.

### References

- Abramson, S. (1991). "Use of Court-Appointed Advocates to Assist in Permanency Planning for Minority Children." *Child Welfare* 60(4): 477-487.
- Berliner, L. (1998). *Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children in Washington State: A Review of Effectiveness*. Olympia, WA: Washington State Institute for Public Policy.
- Black, M. (2000). *Assessment of Best Use of CASA Programs by the Court: Friend of the Court vs. Parties to the Action: Working Draft*. Submitted to the Arizona Supreme Court, Administrative Office of the Courts. Pittsburgh, PA: NCJJ.
- Bogle, T.G. (1996). *Evaluation of the Virginia Court-Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program*. Richmond, VA: Criminal Justice Research Center.
- Bozynski, M. (2000). *Effectiveness of CASA Programs: Working Draft*. Submitted to the Arizona Supreme Court, Administrative Office of the Courts. Pittsburgh, PA: NCJJ.
- CSR. (1995). *Final Report on the Validation and Effectiveness Study of Legal Representation through Guardian Ad Litem*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- CSR. (1988). *National Evaluation of the Impact of Guardians Ad Litem in Child Abuse or Neglect Judicial Proceedings*. Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services.
- Dameron, S.L., M.P. Brown, V. Orloff, & R. Roberts. (1995). *Evaluation of the CASA Program of Cabell County, WV*. Huntington, WV: Criminal Justice Department, Marshall University.
- Erny, S.W. (1994). *Evaluation of the CASA Project of Jefferson County*. Louisville, KY: CASA.
- Litzelfelner, P. (undated). *A Study of the Effectiveness of CASAs in Achieving Positive Outcomes for Children*. Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky.
- National Center for State Courts. (1988). *Report of Evaluation of CASA Program in Iowa*. North Andover, MA: National Center for State Courts.
- National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association. (1999). *Resolution Regarding the Use of CASA Volunteers in Domestic Relations Custody Cases*. Seattle, WA: Author.
- National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association. (1998). *Report of the 1998 National CASA Association Program Survey*. Seattle, WA: Author.
- National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association. (1997). *National CASA Association Standards for CASA Programs*. Seattle, WA: Author.
- Poertner, J. & A. Press. (1990). "Who Best Represents the Interests of the Child in Court?" *Child Welfare* 69(6): 537-549.
- Rubio, D.M. & A.M. Jones. (1999). *Evaluation of the Arizona Court Appointed Special Advocates Program*. Denver, CO: National Center for State Courts.
- Snyder, K.C., J.D. Downing, & J.A. Jacobson. (1996). *A Report to the Ohio Children's Foundation on the Effectiveness of the CASA Program of Franklin County: Phase II*. Columbus, OH: Strategy Team.
- Snyder, K.C., J.D. Downing, & J.A. Jacobson. (1995). *A Report to the Ohio Children's Foundation on the Effectiveness of the CASA Program of Franklin County: Phase I*. Columbus, OH: Strategy Team.

# Ohio Scheduled for Federal IV-E Maintenance Reviews this Spring

Barbara Turpin, Program Developer, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

---

The previous issue of the *Ohio Family Court Bulletin* discussed how the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) changed state child welfare Administrative Code rules to comply with Federal regulation changes effective March 27, 2000. The state regulations became effective June 13, 2000 and require public child services agencies (PCSAs) to obtain certain judicial determinations for children to be eligible for Title IV-E foster care maintenance payments. These include the judicial determinations of “best interest,” initial “reasonable efforts,” and ongoing annual “reasonable efforts to finalize the permanency plan” to be contained in court orders. The American Bar Association’s (ABA) Center for Children and the Law interpreted the Federal regulations as requiring that the findings in court be “detailed” in that they “contain relevant case facts” (American Bar Association, 2000). Further, the ABA asserts that orders that simply contain references to state laws are unacceptable. Federal and the new State regulations confirm that, beyond the actual written order of the court, the only other accepted documentation for compliance are the appropriate findings recorded in the court hearings transcripts. Affidavits or retroactive orders are unacceptable.

The Children’s Bureau, part of the Administration for Children and Families within the Federal Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), will review these judicial determinations, the child’s Title IV-E eligibility, and the placement provider’s eligibility for compliance (Title IV-E Foster Care, 2000). DHHS scheduled Ohio’s eligibility review for March 26-30, 2001. A statewide sample of 80 cases that received Title IV-E foster care maintenance reimbursement between April 1-September 30, 2000 will be randomly selected from county specific data submitted to DHHS and reviewed by staff from DHHS and ODJFS. The data also include cases from those juvenile courts that have entered into a IV-E interagency agreement with ODJFS to claim IV-E reimbursement for foster care maintenance payments for IV-E eligible children for whom the court maintains care and placement responsibility. In order to be in substantial compliance, Ohio must achieve a minimum of 90% (8 or less cases) compliance with the review requirements. If Ohio is found not to be in substantial compliance, the state will be subject to an additional case review of approximately 150 cases, a program improvement plan, and possible penalties against Ohio’s IV-E funding.

In preparation for the DHHS review, ODJFS conducted preliminary reviews of a random sample of IV-E cases from PCSAs and juvenile courts. The initial finding was a statewide accuracy rate below substantial compliance. As a result,

agencies have been encouraged to complete a self-assessment and the Office for Children and Families is providing ongoing technical assistance through weekly informational video conferences during December 2000 and January 2001. In addition, DHHS will pull the random case sample by mid-January 2001. The affected agencies will have an opportunity to review the cases for accuracy and make any adjustments where possible. ODJFS will then receive the cases in February for an additional review of accuracy and request any required documentation, if necessary.

If you are interested in the video conferences or have additional questions about the upcoming IV-E review, contact Jessie Tower, Chief of the Bureau of Title IV-E Plan Administration, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, at (614) 466-1213.

#### References

American Bar Association’s Center on Children and the Law. (June 2000). *Child Court Works* 4(1).

“Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Reviews and Child and Family Services State Plan Reviews.” (January 25, 2000). 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356, and 1357, *Federal Register* 65(16): 4019-4093.

## **UPDATE: Court Ordered Placements with a Specific Foster Care Provider**

---

In compliance with the Federal Final Rule, Ohio’s new state regulations stipulate that Title IV-E foster care maintenance is not available when a court orders a placement with a specific foster care provider and places that child in a PCSA’s custody. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services clarified the regulation by offering that the regulation should not require the court to always concur with the PCSA’s recommendation regarding placement to be eligible for IV-E foster care maintenance and continues: “As long as the court considers relevant testimony and works with all parties, including the agency with placement and care responsibility, to make appropriate placement decisions, we will not disallow payments” (Children’s Bureau, 2000).

#### References

Children’s Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2000). *Frequently Asked Questions About the Title IV-E Final Rule*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cb/>.

---

## *Project Updates*

---

Hunter Hurst, Jr., Senior Research Assistant, NCJJ

### **Clermont County Domestic Relations Court in Partnership with the Clermont County Probate/Juvenile Court**

---

#### Moving Toward an Automated Index to Flag Related Family Cases

Under the family court pilot, the Probate/Juvenile Court is developing a software interface between its information system and the Domestic Relations Court's information system. Current plans are for the Probate/Juvenile Court to model the interface with the Domestic Court and possibly engage the General Division of Common Pleas and the Municipal Court in the future. As the automated index develops, an approach to coordinating family cases across all court divisions may be possible, similar to approaches being modeled in Butte County, California and Seattle, Washington.

#### Mediation

The Clermont Probate/Juvenile Court is expanding its mediation resources by organizing trained mediators in the community. The court identified eight mediators and began making referrals in early June for mediation of custody and visitation matters. Since that time, five individuals have emerged as the court's primary sources for contract mediation.

### **Fayette County Probate/Juvenile Court in Partnership with the Fayette County Common Pleas Court and the Fayette County Municipal Court**

---

#### Family Services Coordination Identifies a Need for GALs

With guidance from the Ohio CASA/GAL Association, the Fayette Probate/Juvenile Court is currently seeking grant funds to start a program to recruit, train, and supervise volunteer GALs. The court's family court pilot and a new position created under the pilot for a family services coordinator demonstrated the need for a volunteer program. The position of family services coordinator was originally intended to accept referrals from the judges and court departments to coordinate family services and monitor compliance with court orders, such as a suspended sentence for contempt of child support. However, the court has increasingly depended on the coordinator to serve as a GAL

in child protection and custody cases. Having identified a strong need for GALs, the court is working toward a solution that preserves the original concept for a family services coordinator and builds a new program where it is needed most.

#### Intake Coordination and Case Consolidation

Among the family court pilots, the partnership among the courts in Fayette County is the first to implement both a system for screening for related family cases at intake and a protocol for consolidating cases across court divisions. Because the courts have already established a system for screening for related family cases at intake, they have begun to consolidate family cases before a single judge when they agree it serves the best interest of a child.

### **Lorain County Domestic Relations Division and Juvenile Branch**

---

#### A Strong Program for Volunteer GALs: Voices for Children

Since 1989, the Lorain County Domestic Relations Court has supported Voices for Children (VFC), a volunteer CASA/GAL program that is a good example of a court-based program with non-profit status. The program employs a program director, a volunteer coordinator, a recruitment specialist, and an office manager. The court pays for the salaries and benefits for most of the program staff, and VFC's non-profit board supports its community relations, volunteer recruitment, and fundraising activities.

Through aggressive semi-annual recruitment and training efforts and its non-profit board, VFC is large enough to provide an advocate to over half of the court's active child protection caseload. Youths not served by VFC because they may have an open delinquency case are appointed a guardian from the court's list of attorneys available to receive GAL appointments. Similarly, the court appoints attorneys from this list to represent GALs as required.

The bulk of appointments to VFC are for advocacy in child protection cases. However, the court also assigns volunteers in a limited number of complicated private custody cases. The court appoints attorney GALs for the children of separating parents when parents request a GAL or the court determines the best interest of the child requires it. Whether a parent requests a GAL or the court requires one, the parents must pay for the costs in divorces.

### Expansion of Court Based Mediation Services Targets Pro Se Litigants

The Lorain County Domestic Relations Court has recently expanded the range of mediation services offered by its Department for Family Court Services. Since July, the Family Court Department has accepted referrals for mediation for post decree matters arising from a divorce. The effort serves as the spearhead for improving the court's response to domestic filings *pro se*. The court has drafted forms and placed these in offices where *pro se* litigants are likely to approach the system for help, such as the local Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA). Since July, the post-decree mediation program for *pro se* litigants has screened over 125 referrals for family court services, including mediation.

### Court Applies Case Management Principles to Divorces

As part of its family court pilot, the court issued a local rule to require a client/attorney case management conference in front of a magistrate 8-10 weeks from filing. Since the rule was implemented, divorces in general are 42% more likely to close within the first 3 months of filing. More importantly, divorces involving children are 67% more likely to close within the first 3 months.

### Court Continues to Extend Therapeutic Approach

In the past year, the court has extended its therapeutic approach by implementing two drug courts: one for delinquent youth with serious substance abuse problems and one for substance abusing parents referred to court on child protection matters. The Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services provides funds to both drug courts and recently awarded them a continuation grant, allowing them to continue for an additional year.

## **Mercer County Common Pleas Court, Probate/ Juvenile and General/Domestic Relations Divisions**

---

### GALs in Mercer County

Instead of recruiting volunteers, the Mercer County Common Pleas Court appoints attorneys as GALs. The Probate/Juvenile Division assigns attorney GALs to children in most protection cases from a list of private attorneys qualified to accept appointments. The court requires these attorneys to be experienced family law attorneys. The court also assigns attorney GALs to safeguard the best interest of children involved in contentious custody matters. The majority of the GALs are now also trained mediators.

### Mediation

Our Home Inc. continues to provide mediation services for domestic relations, custody and visitation, and child support

cases referred from the Mercer County Common Pleas Court. The family court pilot mediation program was initiated in July 1999 and, as of mid-November 2000, 54 cases have been referred through the pilot effort. Of these 54 cases, 30 (56%) resulted in successful mediations, 16 mediations (30%) were deemed unsuccessful, and 8 cases (15%) were currently pending.

### Tracking Cases Referred to Mercer County's Seek Work Program (SWP)

The Mercer County Common Pleas Court, in collaboration with that county's CSEA, Department of Job and Family Services, and a local service provider (Gateway Outreach Center), instituted an innovative program to encourage and assist unemployed adults with active child support orders to obtain employment. All unemployed individuals court ordered into the program who did not obtain employment during a given week must appear in court with proof of at least two job applications per day (with a minimum total of 12 per week). In addition, these program participants are court ordered to the Gateway Outreach Center for assessment and to participate in any services included in the case plan developed from this assessment. All participants are subject to up to a 30-day jail sentence for contempt if they do not comply with program requirements.

Since 1997, more than 700 individuals have been referred to the Seek Work Program – a number of them multiple times. The magistrate and CSEA support staff manually track SWP participants and program compliance. As part of the family court pilot initiative, NCJJ has modified case tracking software to assist Mercer County in tracking its SWP caseload and to eventually provide the collaborating agencies with aggregate client demographic, participation, and outcome statistics. The court received a pilot version of the software (developed in Microsoft Access 2000) this past October and is currently field-testing it.



**National Center for Juvenile Justice**  
**710 Fifth Avenue**  
**Pittsburgh, PA 15219-3000**

**Ohio Family Court Bulletin** is a copyrighted publication of the National Center for Juvenile Justice in conjunction with the Supreme Court of Ohio. This bulletin is a quarterly publication that reports on the progress of Ohio's Family Court Feasibility Study.

The Ohio Family Court Feasibility Study refers to a constellation of activities jointly administered by the Supreme Court of Ohio and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services to improve both the interaction between child welfare and judicial systems, and the effectiveness of the intervention in cases involving families where judicial action is required. This study is supported by a blend of federal Court Improvement and Children's Justice Act grant funds.

NCJJ is a non-profit organization that conducts research (statistical, legal, and applied) on a broad range of juvenile justice topics and provides technical assistance to the field.

Production Editor: Kristy Bronson

For additional information contact:

Gregory Halemba  
National Center for Juvenile Justice  
412-227-6950  
halemba@ncjj.org  
[www.ncjj.org](http://www.ncjj.org)

Douglas Stephens  
The Supreme Court of Ohio  
614-752-8967  
StephenD@sconet.state.oh.us  
[www.sconet.state.oh.us/navigat.htm](http://www.sconet.state.oh.us/navigat.htm)

Kristin Gilbert  
Governor's Task Force  
Ohio Department of Job and Family Services  
614-728-3467  
GilbeK@odjfs.state.oh.us  
[www.state.oh.us/odjfs/](http://www.state.oh.us/odjfs/)