



Children's Court Improvement Commission

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Task Force on Children's Code Holding Public Meeting on Thursday

The New Mexico Supreme Court's Children's Court Improvement Commission (CCIC), has convened a Children's Code Task Force, which is holding an online public meeting on Thursday, May 11, 2023, from 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The Children's Code Task Force will review the laws that constitute the Children's Code. The task force's mission is to study and make recommendations for revisions or amendments to the laws. The Children's Code creates the legal framework by which Courts, the Children Youth and Families Department and other stakeholders ensure a child's care, health and safety in New Mexico. The Children's Code governs child welfare issues generally, adoptions, delinquency, emancipations, mental health, and fostering connections.

Although the work of the task force will occur over several years, the task force will submit recommendations to the CCIC for legislative changes and draft legislation throughout the review process.

Task force meetings may include listening sessions, focus groups, and presentations from experts to inform the work of the task force and CCIC. The task force intends to hear from Native American tribes and pueblos, social workers, mental health professionals, youth and parents with lived experiences, teachers and school administrators, foster parents, law enforcement and others. The task force also intends to solicit input from stakeholders from both urban and rural communities.

Initial topics to be discussed by the task force include improving responses to poverty and substance misuse, as well as improving system responsiveness to crossover youth – those who are involved with both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems – under the Children's Code.

The task force is chaired by Judge Catherine Begaye, Presiding Judge of the Children's Court in the Second Judicial District in Bernalillo County. The Second Judicial District has the largest number of cases in the state filed under the Children's Code.

The task force will hold public meetings every month. Information regarding the composition of the task force, the schedule of meetings, and registration to attend upcoming public meetings virtually can be found at <https://www.nmcourts.gov/childrens-code-task-force/>.

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