



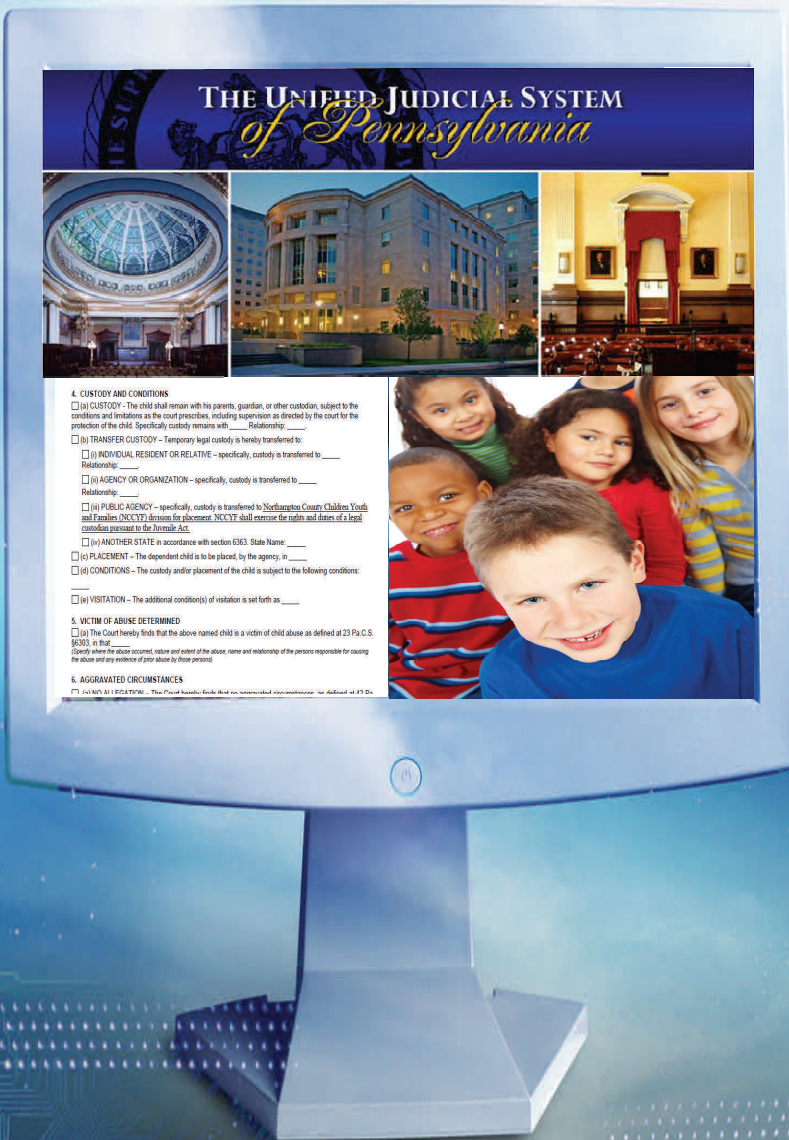
Report to the Pennsylvania State Roundtable

CPCMS Users Workgroup

May 2012

Chairperson:

Honorable J. Brian Johnson
Court of Common Pleas of Lehigh County



Common Pleas Case Management System (CPCMS) USERS WORKGROUP

Chairperson

Honorable J. Brian Johnson
Court of Common Pleas of Lehigh County

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Background

In June of 2008 statewide implementation of the Common Pleas Case Management System (CPCMS), a court-based statewide dependency case management system began. By November 2008, 65 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties were actively entering dependency cases into the system followed by Philadelphia and Allegheny in 2010. CPCMS provides the ability for individual courts to track and manage dependency cases in an automated system and offers a reporting protocol that can be followed by all courts within the state while standardizing practices across the Commonwealth. Gathering statewide court data provides the ability to measure current practices in each of the jurisdictions to determine the effectiveness of programs and the efficiency of the court in providing timely permanent placements and other court related measurements.

During the 2011 State Roundtable Meeting the quality and integrity of the statistical dependency data generated from CPCMS continued to be of primary concern. Additionally, State Roundtable members saw value in forming a workgroup that could voice county/court concerns and assist in the development of solutions alongside the staff of the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC) Judicial Automation department. Therefore, it was recommended that a new CPCMS Users Workgroup be formed and Judge J. Brian Johnson, Court of Common Pleas of Lehigh County, volunteered to be its chairperson.

The workgroup represented by members from various county sizes and positions within court administration, clerk of courts, and child welfare, met two times between 2011-2012. During these meetings the workgroup was provided a detailed history of the development of the CPCMS Dependency system including an overview of the national Court Performance Measurements used as its foundation. The workgroup shared experiences, successes and concerns related to CPCMS and examined mechanisms currently in place to address system modifications. Workgroup members provided input that led to several positive system enhancements (i.e., the need to track the number and reasons for continuances in dependency matters). Workgroup members tested and supported the use of the newly created CPCMS Dependency Data Dashboard and also reviewed and approved the newly established *Best Practices for Achieving High Quality CPCMS Dependency Data* made available to assist those counties struggling with the quality and integrity of their dependency data. (*Appendix*)

The CPCMS Dependency Court Data Dashboard

The CPCMS Dependency Court Data Dashboard, developed by AOPC's Judicial Automation using Microsoft Excel, is an interactive tool for displaying statistical dependency data generated from CPCMS in a visual format. There are two ways in which the dashboard may be utilized.

The first is to select a single data measure to view its value statewide in a map format. The statewide data comparison across counties is based on the following data measures: event track, time to adjudication, placement, goals, age at end of supervision, race, gender and length of supervision and allows for adjustable data parameters that provide the ability to customize the metrics shown. The data measure results are displayed by either the total number of cases or by the percentage of cases.

The second is to select a single county to view all data measures including summarized and detailed case adjudication and termination data as well as county demographic data compared to the average of all counties within the state or within the same Leadership Roundtable.

Best Practices for Achieving High Quality CPCMS Dependency Data

In the fall of 2011 AOPC Judicial Automation offered a one-day advanced CPCMS training in multiple locations across the state emphasizing the importance of accurate county specific as well as statewide dependency statistics. The training provided advanced CPCMS techniques and methods to improve data quality and integrity for 52 participating counties as well as 160 CPCMS users. The feedback provided during these advanced trainings from its participants as well as its trainers was the basis for the eight best practices developed to assist counties in their efforts to improve and maintain the quality and integrity of their dependency data.

Next Steps and Recommendations

The CPCMS Users Workgroup is planning to meet two times in the upcoming year. At these meetings the workgroup will continue to focus its efforts on improving the functionality of CPCMS as well as the statistical data it produces.

The members of the CPCMS Users Workgroup respectfully recommend the State Roundtable:

1. Endorse distribution of the CPCMS Dependency Court Data Dashboard to all County Trial Courts to ensure their CPCMS statistical data is accurate before the CPCMS Dependency Court Data Dashboard is made available for public use on the AOPC website in the Fall of 2012.
2. Endorse distribution of the *Best Practices for Achieving High Quality CPCMS Dependency Data*, listed in the appendix of this report, to all counties struggling with the quality and integrity of their dependency data.

APPENDIX

Best Practices for Achieving High Quality CPCMS Dependency Data

Best Practice # 1

Establish and Maintain Positive Communication

Establish Regular Communication

The county agency, clerk of courts, court administration, and the Court should communicate regularly regarding dependency data and business procedures.

- Consider what level of formality is right for the county, ranging from informal discussions or email correspondences to formal scheduled meetings.
- Ensure that attendees are close enough to the issue to participate meaningfully, and also have authority to recommend or implement changes.

Establish Protocol to Resolve Routine Issues

Routine issues often occur when clerks encounter difficulty recording a docket or outcome in CPCMS.

- Clerks should communicate with an agency representative or the Court to alert them of the issue.
- If particular issues are reoccurring, they should be brought to a higher level to discuss potential solutions.

Maintain Positive Communication

When communicating issues, be mindful of the manner and tone of the communication.

- Focus on identifying and resolving issues, not placing blame.
- State concerns clearly and in a non-confrontational manner.
- Give consideration to concerns raised by other offices.

Best Practice #2

Document County Business Procedures

Document Business Procedures

Identify routine procedures for preparing and recording documents, providing service, scheduling hearings and recording outcomes.

- Involve all parties in the development and review of the document and periodically review the document.
- Establish timelines, office and personnel responsibilities, and other quality standards.
- Establish procedures for reporting and handling situations when timelines, responsibilities or standards are not met.
- Identify procedures for non-routine situations. (*examples: private petitions, appeals at various stages of a case, dispositions that rarely occur in your county, etc.*)

Benefits of Documenting Business Procedures

- Documenting procedures may identify areas where no process exists and a process can then be implemented proactively.
- Alternately documenting procedures may identify areas where duplicate work is being done.
- The document will clearly delineate office responsibilities.
- Documenting procedures will also help with developing succession plans and continuity of operations plans (COOP).

Best Practice #3

Consider Courtroom Processing Improvement

Benefits of Improving Courtroom Processing

The courtroom is the source of most of the outcomes data that CPCMS records.

- Moving the processing closer to the source reduces errors and miscommunications.
- Any potential processing issues can be addressed in the courtroom in the presence of all parties.

Recording Outcomes While In the Courtroom

- The Court may review the Order prior to it being served to ensure accuracy.
- Parties may be served with the Order prior to dismissal, reducing service costs and ensuring all parties know the outcome of the hearing and their responsibilities.
- Errors may be corrected before dismissal, reducing misunderstandings and miscommunications.

Using Pending Outcomes and/or Written Templates

- The agency may prepare outcomes in a pending status in CPCMS for easy acceptance or modification by the clerk.
- Alternately, the agency might bring a proposed order in template form to court.
- Template forms can be used to communicate between the Court and the Clerk to ensure accurate outcome selection.

Best Practice #4

Address Obstacles in Document Processing

Effects of Delays on Statistics and Case Processing

Delaying the filing and recording of documents increases the possibility for errors and decreases the probability of the errors being resolved.

- Since CPCMS defaults to the current date, late filing of documents creates additional work for clerks who must specify the correct date.
- Timely filing ensures compliance with the provisions of the Rules of Juvenile Court Procedure, effective service on parties, and a swifter appeal process.

Areas to Address

- Ensure that Orders and Recommendations are filed as soon as possible.
- Establish a process for reviewing and accepting Master's Recommendations in a timely fashion, and use reports to ensure that all Recommendations are reviewed.
CPCMS 3938 Masters Recommendation Report
- If pending outcomes are used, establish a process to ensure that pending documents are accepted or rejected.
- Review your court's business processes to ensure that the timelines dictated by the Rules of Juvenile Court Procedure are met.

Best Practice #5

Understand Dependency Case Processing in CPCMS

Utilizing Standard Documents

- Ensure that all parties are aware of the standard, statewide documents and ensure that the documents are used in all scenarios where required.
- The office/person who selects which document to prepare must understand case processing for dependency cases so that the right document is used.
- Avoid excluding certain classes of cases or hearings from the use of standard documents.
- Report concerns about standard documents to the CPCMS Help Desk so that they can be addressed by AOPC staff, the Juvenile Procedural Rules Committee and, if necessary, the Department of Public Welfare.

Understanding Dependency Case Processing

- All dependency personnel should be familiar with dependency case processing so that they can identify potential case processing errors.
- If unsure of correct procedures when recording non-routine processes, seek guidance from the CPCMS Help Desk.
- Consider the impact that a particular process will have on statistics.
CPCMS 2230 Daily Docketing Report
CPCMS 2275 Daily List Docketing Report

Best Practice # 6

Report and Record All Relevant Data

Reporting and Recording Important Data

- Filers should ensure that all relevant data on the child is included on the initiating document. Date of birth, gender, race, and ethnicity are particularly important.
- Clerks should be careful to record all data that is provided on initiating documents in CPCMS.
- Procedures should be established to report and record updated or corrected information when it becomes available.
- Counties should utilize reports to identify missing data and work with the Agency in gathering and recording this data.
CPCMS 3922 Dependency Pending Case Demographics Report
CPCMS 3900 Dependency Case Report

Best Practice # 7

Utilize a “Data Custodian” or “Data Team”

Appoint Users to Monitor Data

- Establish an individual or group of individuals who have the responsibility of reviewing data for accuracy.
- These individuals would dedicate a portion of their work time to the task of reviewing dependency data for quality control purposes and reviewing dependency reports
- These individuals could then communicate with the appropriate offices to clean up or discuss data issues.
CPCMS 3902 Dependency Case Processing Summary Report
CPCMS 3910 Unscheduled Active Juvenile Cases Report
CPCMS 3941 Scheduled Events without an Outcome Report
CPCMS 3938 Master Recommendation Report

Methods of Monitoring Data

- Review statistical reports paying special attention to exception areas.
CPCMS 3920 Dependency Case Inventory Report
CPCMS 3922 Dependency Pending Case Demographics Report
- Look at a subset of the county’s case load and inspect the data in CPCMS for completeness and accuracy.
- For selected cases, compare CPCMS data with the physical case file to ensure accuracy.

Best Practice # 8

Use Day Forward-Day Backward for Data Cleanup

Day Forward/Day Backward Process A multi-step process for resolving data issues:

- Identify the data issue.
- Determine the cause of the issue.
- From a certain day forward, begin using the correct procedure to prevent the issue from continuing to occur.
- Go back and correct data that was entered incorrectly.

Identify the Data Issue and Determine the Cause

- Review reports to find data measures that seem to not reflect the county's actual caseload or practices accurately.
CPCMS 3920 Dependency Case Inventory Report
CPCMS 3922 Dependency Pending Case Demographics Report
CPCMS 3910 Unscheduled Active Juvenile Cases Report CPCMS
3941 Scheduled Events without an Outcome Report CPCMS 3938
Master Recommendation Report
- Use reports showing case detail to find examples of data that seem incorrect.
- Look for patterns across many cases to determine why the data is being entered incorrectly.

Implementing the Day Forward Changes

- Identify changes in business process or data entry that are needed to prevent the issue from recurring.
- Identify which staff will implement the changes.
- When critical functions are being affected, it may be helpful to choose a future date to begin the correct procedure so that affected parties can prepare for the change.
- Ensure that everyone is aware of the change and how it will affect them.

Looking Backward to Correct Data

- Identify the best way to modify incorrect data.
- Identify which staff will correct this data.
- Prioritize data correction based on the nature of the error and the county's needs. *Example: Correct oldest cases first, correct latest errors first, correct cases that are nearing completion first, etc.*

Monitoring the Change

- Continue monitoring the statistical reports to see the effect of the changes to the data.
- Confirm that "day forward" cases are no longer causing data problems.
- Monitor the clean-up of existing data errors to ensure they are being addressed.