

The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges participated in the Pinwheels for Prevention event to support prevention of child abuse.



National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges:

Nevada Based Non-Profit with National Impact Improves Lives of Children and Families Seeking Justice

BY JOEY ORDUÑA HASTINGS, CEO OF NATIONAL COUNCIL
OF JUVENILE AND FAMILY COURT JUDGES

Nevada's citizens find themselves in court at some of the most poignant, vulnerable, and challenging moments of their lives. Ask a member of the Reno-based National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ), and they will inform you that the most valuable education and training on juvenile justice, child welfare, and family violence is through the work of this organization, which was established in 1937.

The knowledge and skills necessary to tackle the issues in juvenile justice and child welfare do not come with a higher education or law degree. Judges and those in the legal profession go to law school to understand the law. Judges go to the NCJFCJ for the legal training, research, and best practices on the complex issues that affect the juvenile and family courts. With the NCJFCJ,

they get the most cutting-edge research and insights on the challenges and successes that affect their work.

Areas of focus for the NCJFCJ include trauma-informed courts and adolescent brain development, domestic child sex trafficking, child abuse and neglect, tribal courts and the Indian Child Welfare Act, juvenile drug treatment courts, military-connected families, domestic violence, access to justice, behavioral health, and wellness/self-care.

The NCJFCJ holds two national conferences annually — the National Conference on Juvenile Justice and the Annual Conference — and the organization is also known for its longstanding Child Abuse and Neglect Institute, the Institute for New Juvenile and Family Court Judges, the National Judicial Institute on Domestic Violence, and Monday Morning Moments: a wellness webinar series for judges and court professionals. In addition, the NCJFCJ produces webinars, publications, technical assistance bulletins, and in-person training events throughout the year. The NCJFCJ has produced seminal publications that include “Effective Intervention in Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment Cases: Guidelines for Policy and Practice,” the “Enhanced Resource Guidelines,” which is predominantly and widely used in improving court practices in child abuse and neglect cases, and the “Model Code on Domestic and Family Violence,” which is considered the preeminent resource for judges, court professionals, and professionals working in domestic and family violence.

86 Years Running

As the nation’s oldest and largest judicial membership and education organization, the NCJFCJ has been in existence for 86 years. Together with its research arm, the National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ) in Pittsburgh, the NCJFCJ has trained approximately 7,000 judges, attorneys, and other court-related professionals across the country throughout the past year.

In the late 1960s, the NCJFCJ moved its headquarters to the University of Nevada, Reno and has been affiliated with the university ever since. The Epicenter for Judicial Education at the University of Nevada, Reno is a collaborative effort with the NCJFCJ, the university’s judicial studies graduate program, and the National Judicial College. Together, these entities offer unmatched resources, educational opportunities, and progressive thinking to prepare decision-makers and leaders serving the third branch of government.

As CEO of the NCJFCJ and a native Nevadan, I believe that anyone involved in the legal system should utilize the organization’s resources as these topics supersede docket assignments. The issues in the juvenile and family courts are so complex, that what is presented in court may not be what you think it is until you peel back the multiple layers of the intricacies involved. If you are a judge, an attorney, or a court professional, it’s invaluable to understand other issues that may be presented that the court may not necessarily be aware of but are essential in identifying the bigger picture of a young person’s or family’s situation. Working with young people and survivors of violence can be counterintuitive. What you think may work may not, in fact, work. It’s critical to understand and identify what the right thing is for the right person at the right time.

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NATIONAL COUNCIL OF
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The NCJFCJ’s Impact in Nevada

The NCJFCJ’s work spans the state. There are nearly 130 judicial and associate members in Nevada, and in 2022, the NCJFCJ trained more than 300 judges, attorneys, and other court-related professionals in the state.

Other Nevada highlights include:

- Maintaining a longstanding partnership with the Nevada Court Improvement Program to provide training in child abuse and neglect for all Nevada judicial districts.
- Working with the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Children Youth and Family Services, the NCJFCJ has developed the Nevada Center for Juvenile Justice Innovation, an evidence-based program resource center to support the adoption of best practices in Nevada’s juvenile justice system.
- Partnering with the Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice, the NCJFCJ conducts a juvenile probation data capacity assessment for Clark County and provides technical assistance to improve data use and dissemination.
- Providing targeted support to the Elko County Juvenile Drug Treatment Court team, which is implementing the Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Guidelines and other key recommended practices. The NCJFCJ is funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to support this program.
- The Washoe County NCJFCJ Mentor Child Abuse and Neglect Model Court and the Clark County Mentor Child Abuse and Neglect Model Court are recognized for their efforts to improve outcomes for abused and neglected children, juvenile offenders, and their families.
- The Family Division of the Second Judicial District Court of Washoe County is an NCJFCJ Project ONE site (One family-one judge, no wrong door, equal and coordinated access to justice).
- The Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence is an organizational member of the NCJFCJ.
- Patricia Cafferata of Reno is a board director of the NCJFCJ and Joseph Asher of Las Vegas recently served on the NCJFCJ board. Melissa “Missy” Young, chief information officer at Switch in Las Vegas and Ann Wilkinson of Reno serve on the NCJFCJ’s Amicus Council. Joseph Asher, Cafferata, Sandy Gamba, Paul Georgeson, Jeanne Karadanis, and Young are Sustaining Members of the NCJFCJ.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges

Building a Diverse, Inclusive, and Culturally Competent Bench and Legal Profession

In 2019, the NCJFCJ led the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Summit, a first-of-its-kind event convening with organizations representing the judicial and legal profession. Its mission is to identify, design, and implement coordinated actions between its member organizations to build a diverse, inclusive, and culturally competent bench and legal profession. It also encompasses those serving in roles of court management, dispute resolution, mental health, and court operations to improve and deliver new, effective, and culturally relevant court outcomes.

The DEI Collaborative continues to convene annually to make progress

towards its objectives. Members include: the Academy of Court-Appointed Neutrals, the American Bar Association Judicial Division, the American Judges Association, the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts, the Hispanic National Bar Association, the International Association of LGBTQ+ Judges, the National LGBTQ+ Bar Association, the National American Indian Court Judges Association, the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association, the National Association for Court Management, the National Association of Women Judges, the National Bar Association, the National Center for State Courts, the National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts, and the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.



National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) board members and executive team members in Washington, D.C., for the 2023 NCJFCJ Days on the Hill event.

Leading With Judicial Leadership and Engagement

Without data-driven and developmentally appropriate practices, juvenile and family courts will continue to be challenged to make timely decisions. With well-resourced courts, current training and best practices for the judiciary, outcomes for children and families can be improved in Nevada communities and communities across the country.

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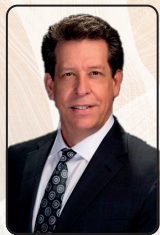
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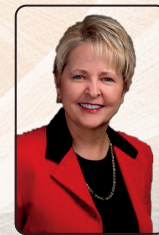
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One of the core principles of the NCJFCJ is judicial leadership. The NCJFCJ believes that judges need to spend time in their communities to garner community response and identification of services. In other words, they need to be in their communities and off the bench. Judges and communities who focus on safety and prevention will better ensure fair and coordinated justice for families and collaborative, data-driven reforms that improve efficiency.

Compassion. Leadership. Education. Community.

These are the organizational pillars of the NCJFCJ. Its vital and important work impacts the lives of children and families in the legal system where, collectively, we will achieve the vision of a society in which every child and family has access to fair, equal, effective, and timely justice.

For information about the NCJFCJ, its publications, webinars, events and how to get involved, visit NCJFCJ.org.

Please reach out to me at jhastings@ncjfcj.org for further information, membership details, or to express your interest in serving as a faculty member at upcoming NCJFCJ institutes, conferences, and educational programs.

JOEY ORDUÑA HASTINGS, J.D., is the chief executive officer of the Reno-based National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ). She has played a key leadership role in the creation of a Judicial Education Epicenter in partnership with the judicial studies program with the University of Nevada, Reno and the National Judicial College. Previously, she served as the assistant county manager of administration and finance for Washoe County and was the court administrator and clerk of court at the Washoe County Second Judicial District Court.



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