

**MINUTES**  
**Custody Mediation Advisory Committee**  
**November 19, 2021**

The Custody Mediation Advisory Committee (CMAC) met online via WebEx on Friday, November 19, 2021. The Honorable J. Corpening called the meeting to order at Noon.

*CMAC Members:*

Judge J. Corpening, Committee Chair  
Sheila Eley  
Kristen Hirsch  
Cheryl Howell  
Rick Igou  
Judge Christine Walczyk  
Nisha Williams

*NCAOC Staff:*

Ryan Boyce  
Asia Prince  
Stephanie C. Smith  
Kari Marvin  
Tara Minter  
*Guests:*  
Melissa Jackson  
Emily Westover

**Welcome & Approval of Draft Minutes**

Judge Corpening welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Asia Prince, the newly hired NCAOC Director of Court Programs. Judge Corpening reminded members that the meeting is being live streamed to satisfy the state's open meeting requirements. Draft minutes from the July 30, 2021 meeting were shared in advance of the meeting. After review, the minutes were unanimously approved without changes on a motion from Rick Igou and seconded by Sheila Eley.

**Odyssey Update**

Judge Corpening thanked Judge Walczyk for suggesting that this committee would benefit from a presentation on the new integrated case management system, Odyssey. Melissa Jackson and Emily Westover from the NCAOC Business Analysis and Process Management (BAPM)/E-courts team joined the meeting to share basic information about Odyssey, explain how it relates to the Custody Mediation Program, and answer submitted questions. NCAOC contracted with Tyler Technologies in 2019 to provide a suite of cloud-based solutions to modernize operations, increase efficiencies, and provide greater remote access to clients. Odyssey is a streamlined mainframe system that will replace current legacy applications and programs. It is role-based, so the user will only see the information that pertains to their position.

Emily Westover responded to the questions submitted from CMAC members:

**What changes should we expect?**

Custody mediator job functions will remain the same. Odyssey will update and improve their recordkeeping and case management system.

**How can Custody Mediation departments ensure that they are represented during implementation?**

Local implementation teams consisting of NCAOC staff, local representatives, and Tyler Technologies staff are convened in each district well in advance of Odyssey

*Custody Mediation Advisory Committee – November 19, 2021*

implementation. Custody mediators should communicate regularly with their local team representatives about their program needs. Custody mediators should also complete self-paced Tyler learning modules.

**What level of access will custody mediation staff have in Odyssey?**

In addition to having user access for family cases in their districts, mediators will have statewide inquiry access to criminal and other civil cases, which will be useful for domestic violence screening.

**Will mediators have Odyssey calendar access for scheduling?**

Custody mediators will be able to use calendars/add hearings for orientation use. Mediators can also add case management events and share documents.

**Without CaseWise codes, how will we conduct case management?**

CaseWise codes have been replaced by corresponding Odyssey events. Due dates can be utilized to help make sure cases aren't forgotten or overlooked. Emily shared a Custody Mediation flowchart that included the Odyssey codes.

**Will local forms be available in Odyssey?**

Odyssey can auto-populate NCAOC forms with basic case information. Local forms can continue to be used, but they will not auto-populate.

**What is a queue? What kinds of things will go into a mediator's queue?**

Queues are similar to inboxes and/or mailboxes. On the local level, Emily highly recommends setting up custody mediation queues so tasks can be filtered specifically to custody mediators.

**Will notices/orders be automatically generated and served by the system?**

While not automatic, processes can be designed to minimize staff work. The process builder will streamline work by events triggering tasks. For example, when a clerk flags a case for custody mediation, staff could be notified that action is needed.

**Will custody mediation utilize electronic signatures or manual signatures?**

Judges will use electronic signatures, and parties will utilize "wet" signatures.

Emily demonstrated how custody cases will appear in Odyssey and explored how cases can be flagged for custody mediation. She modeled how parties could be noticed and scheduled for orientation. She also previewed a "tokenized" form that auto-populates with case information.

Judge Corpening thanked Melissa and Emily for attending the meeting and sharing their expertise.

**Custody Mediation Program Update**

Stephanie Smith reported that the new mediator in District 14 has almost completed training. Soon there will be new mediators in District 10 and District 24 due to staff

departure/retirement. Stephanie partnered with the NC Dispute Resolution Committee to offer a training on October 21<sup>st</sup>, Conflict Resolution Day. They arranged for Colin Rule, a nationally recognized expert regarding online mediation, to lead a training on ethical considerations for online mediation. Stephanie reported the Domestic Violence Opt-in video should be complete by the end of the month. Spanish voiceovers are finished, and Stephanie is working on slides to accompany the video. Abby Ware, the NC State intern working with Stephanie, is conducting research on data from the DV Screening protocol in Durham. The statewide template is now being used by coverage mediators. Kari and Bert Barber from the NCAOC Training and Services team will be presenting on the statewide template “generator” at the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts Conference in May 2022.

### **Domestic Violence Update**

Stephanie Satkowiak was unavailable to join the meeting but provided updates to share with the group. Research at UNC evaluating the DV e-filing system indicated there is a sustained decline for involuntary dismissals across all 10 of the counties evaluated. They also found time reductions between the issuance of an *Ex Parte* order and service and between commencement of the action and final disposition. Stephanie developed an online presentation to share the findings with statewide stakeholders, NCAOC personnel, and national partners. UNC also received additional funding to examine how the e-filing system performed during the pandemic.

### **Family Court Update**

DeShield Greene was unavailable to join the meeting but provided updates to share with the group. The Uniform Parentage Act (UPA) subcommittee met in early November and plans to present at the December 10th Family Court Advisory Commission (FCAC) meeting. Judge Beth Dixon and Cheryl Howell will educate the group on the UPA provisions and why it is needed. They will also identify issues that are coming before the courts that the UPA could address. The goal is to determine if the FCAC supports the need for a UPA. If so, the FCAC may decide to contact the North Carolina Bar Association and/or the Chief Justice regarding the need for this legislation and their support of it. Lori Cole and DeShield are preparing a Family Court Annual Report, which includes surveying the 15 Family Court Administrators on their local practices and structure. The goal is to finalize and publish the report by March 1, 2022.

### **Human Trafficking**

Tara Minter shared several highlights from the state budget pertaining to human trafficking. The human trafficking diversion court in Fayetteville and the Human Trafficking Commission received funding from the General Assembly. State Bureau of Investigation staff dedicated to working on human trafficking in North Carolina will increase from 1 to 8 positions. Tara discussed a report from Shared Hope International that evaluated states on their availability of resources/help for human trafficking survivors. North Carolina, like a majority of other states, received a failing grade. All statewide human trafficking organizations will work together to improve resources and assistance.

Ryan Boyce clarified that the funding for the human trafficking court is non-recurring grant funding. He also shared that there were many bright spots in the budget for the Judicial Branch. While there was no funding in the budget for additional custody mediator positions, he will continue to work on getting more resources for the program.

**Conclusion**

Judge Corpening concluded the meeting at 1:23 p.m. Kari will send a survey to determine the 2022 meeting dates. Group members decided to keep the meeting time at Noon.