

## In the Iowa Supreme Court

Order Regarding Report of  
Family Law Case Processing  
Reform Task Force

)  
)  
)

Order

CLERK SUPREME COURT

In 2015, the supreme court established the Family Law Case Processing Reform Task Force “to identify best practices for accessible, transparent, and consistent family law processes and to propose recommendations for new court processes and improvements to current processes for statewide adoption.” The task force was directed to report its findings, conclusions, and recommendations to the court by May 31, 2016. The task force met that deadline, and its report is published on the judicial branch website at <http://www.iowacourts.gov/Administration/Reports/>. The court thanks the members of the task force for their service and well-supported, detailed recommendations. This order sets forth the status of the court’s work on the report and recommendations of the task force.

**1. Spousal Support Guidelines.** The task force does not recommend that Iowa adopt spousal support (alimony) guidelines but provided a thorough study and analysis. The court plans no further action regarding spousal support guidelines at this time.

**2. Informal Family Law Trial—Pilot Project.** The task force recommends the creation of an informal, family law trial procedure. The court will institute a pilot project in the Seventh Judicial District and a supervisory order setting forth the specifics of the project will be issued later this term.

**3. Uniform Mediation Requirements.** The court is studying the recommendations of the task force for uniform mediation requirements in family law cases and anticipates issuing an order seeking public comment on those recommendations later this term.

**4. Temporary Hearings in the Presence of the Parties.** The task force recommends adoption of a statewide rule generally requiring temporary-custody hearings to be conducted in the presence of the parties. The court, by separate order, requests public comment on proposed rule 1.431(10).

**5. Centralized Local Rule Information.** The task force recommends that the varying local rules and procedures for family law cases be updated and made available to court users in a uniform manner on the judicial branch website. The court more broadly has directed the eight judicial districts to update their respective local rules for all cases and submit them for review by July 1, 2017. The court anticipates reviewing the updated local rules during its 2017 administrative term and publishing approved local rules on the judicial branch website.

**6. Standards for Lawyers Representing Children in Custody Cases.** The task force recommends adoption of a modified version of the ABA Standards for Lawyers Representing Children in Custody Cases as an Iowa court rule. The court is studying the recommendation and monitoring legislative action.

**7. Continued Task Force Work.** The court reappoints the members of the task force steering committee to continue studying family law case processing reform and to assist in implementing court-approved recommendations:

Hon. Thomas D. Waterman, Iowa Supreme Court, Davenport, Chair

Matthew J. Brandes, attorney, Cedar Rapids, Co-Chair/Reporter

Lora L. McCollom, attorney, West Des Moines, Co-Chair

David K. Boyd, State Court Administrator, Des Moines

Dan Bechtol, Southwest Iowa Mediation Services, Atlantic

Hon. Thomas N. Bower, Iowa Court of Appeals, Waterloo

Andrea Charlow, Drake University Law School, Des Moines

Hon. Randy S. DeGeest, District Judge, Oskaloosa

Ann L. Estin, University of Iowa College of Law, Iowa City

Andrew B. Howie, attorney, West Des Moines

Hon. Chad A. Kepros, District Judge, Iowa City

Steven H. Lytle, attorney, Des Moines

Amy Moore, Mid-Iowa Mediation and Law, Ames

Carrie O'Connor, Iowa Legal Aid, Dubuque

Laura J. Parrish, attorney, Decorah

Terry D. Parsons, attorney, Cedar Falls

Elizabeth Rosenbaum, attorney, Sioux City

Jenny L. Schulz, Kids First Law Center, Cedar Rapids

Anjela A. Shutts, attorney, Des Moines

The court again thanks all members of the task force as well as the members of the steering committee for their time and expertise dedicated to this important effort.

Dated this 13th day of October, 2016.

The Supreme Court of Iowa

By   
Mark S. Cady, Chief Justice