

**Child Support Guidelines Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, December 18, 2024, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.**

**Facilitator: Dawn Marquardt**

**Minutes: Marci Hamilton**

**Members Present:** Erin Biencourt, Donna Brann, Kelly Evans, Tabitha Fish, Luciana Fontanini, Jeremy Gibons, Heath Hattaway, Martin Herbest, Judge Keith Raines, Trena Klohe, Dawn Marquardt, Natalie Otero, Sabrina Owen, Mike Ritchey, David Rivera-Vernazza, Linda Scher, Amanda Thorpe, and Ceri Villa.

**Members Absent:** Deborah Dowdle, Christine Hill, Marisa Salinas, Shanon Sporseen, and Monica Whitaker.

**Guests:** Jason Chappell, Michelle Chrystal, Kate Cooper Richardson, Amy Croucher, Annie Engel, Marci Hamilton, Sandra James, Lenny Kistler, Alicia Mahan, Dan Meyers, Danielle Napier, Matthew Nagy, Debbie Peck, Alexandra Popescu, Annelisa Smith, Michelle Finzer-Teague, Michelle Underwood, Kristin Webb, and Lori Woltring.

<b>Call to Order, Welcome, and Committee Introductions</b>	<b>Dawn Marquardt</b>
Committee members introduced themselves and shared background and relevant professional or lived experience. There may be additional changes to the committee list. There were a few members who were unable to make it to today’s meeting and should be able to attend next time.	
<b>Project Goals, Guiding Principles, Committee Deliverables, and Roles</b>	<b>Kate Cooper Richardson</b>
<p>Kate welcomed all the committee members, introduced herself and provided her background. She has been the Oregon Child Support Program Director since 2013. Prior to that, she was the deputy director and facilitated the 2011-2013 guidelines review project. For this project, her role will be to review and approve the recommendations made by this committee.</p> <p>Kate explained that all states are federally required to administer child support programs. Federally recognized Tribes can choose to operate their own federal child support program. There are 54 state/territories and 63 federal Tribal child support programs. In Oregon, there are two federally recognized Tribes with child support programs. All state child support programs are required to have child support guidelines, which are to be reviewed every four years.</p> <p>While some states have their guidelines in statutes or require involvement from their Supreme Courts, in Oregon, our guidelines are in administrative rules. This allows our review process to be flexible and quicker. Our last major guidelines review was in 2011-2013. Subsequent reviews have been delayed by the program’s system modernization project and then the Covid-19 pandemic. The first step in the current review was contracting with the Center for Policy Research for a report on economic analysis on child support.</p>	

The four overarching principles that apply to this review process are:

- Guidelines produce fair and equitable awards
- Rules are understandable to families and practitioners
- Calculations to implement the rule are not complex
- Orders are enforceable

The deliverable itself will be a report with recommendations for changes to the administrative rules (may include possible rule language) and the guidelines calculator.

The roles of the committee and workgroups are to identify and discuss issues and propose recommendations. These are public meetings; non-committee members can join the workgroups, and we will work out details as this project moves forward. Dawn will continue to be the facilitator of these meetings.

Judge Raines asked Kate to provide a brief description of the process of creating the administrative rule once she has the recommendation. Kate explained the process and Lori shared the link for sign up for rule update notifications ([Oregon Child Support Program Administrative Rule Update Email Subscription](#)).

<b>Research &amp; Major Issue Overview</b>	<b>Dawn</b>
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On the program’s website, there is [Child Support Guidelines Advisory Committee page](#), which includes a link to the Center for Policy Research report.

Members of the program’s Policy Team put together three papers from this report summarizing the items we’ve identified as potential issues for review by the Committee:

- Guidelines Review Policy Paper on Health Care Coverage – Alexandra Popescu introduced herself and shared the focus of the paper was to identify potential options and considerations for changing the medical support guideline in Oregon. The primary issue to be considered is whether the Oregon Health Plan should be treated the same as private healthcare coverage, no longer prioritizing private healthcare coverage over public. She shared the data that was reviewed and statistical information available on the Oregon Health Authority’s website. The program has identified four possible resolutions or topics for discussion.
- Guidelines Review Policy Paper on Income – Luciana Fontanini shared that this paper discusses issues regarding income and how it is being used under the present guidelines. Income imputation means alleging that a parent has the ability to earn income that they don’t actually earn right now. The federal government prohibits states from using potential or imputed income without actual evidence about a parent’s specific circumstance. Oregon’s guidelines are generally in compliance with the federal rule. However, we do allow imputing income – minimum wage – without actual evidence in two situations, when we do not have earning information or when the receiving parent is receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).
  - The other two issues regarding income are related to the self-support reserve and minimum orders. The self-support reserve is intended to leave the paying parent with income to support themselves and we have it tied to the federal poverty guideline. In surveys conducted with case participants, program employees, and other professionals in family law, many

respondents felt the present self-support reserve was too low and doesn't leave enough for a parent to live on. Minimum orders require parents to pay at least \$100 per month, with a few specific exceptions. There is debate whether this is the correct amount, particularly when the self-support reserves shows that the parent doesn't earn enough to pay support. The paper lays out some different ideas to get the conversations started.

- Guidelines Review Policy Paper on Parenting Time Credit – Lori Woltring explained that Oregon parenting time formula produces gradual adjustments starting at lower parenting time and then it increases more rapidly as it reaches 50% parenting time. Then, it goes back down again as it reaches 100%. Oregon's parenting time formula is considered to be one of the best. There were six areas that were identified and shared that are included in the paper.

These papers will be posted on the public website and on the Teams channel.

**Establishment of Workgroups**

**Dawn Marquardt**

We are going to form workgroups for the three identified areas. There also will be a workgroup later regarding the calculator changes. We need to know what workgroups individuals are interested in joining. Other issues can be discussed in the workgroups if needed. Public participants and the Oregon Child Support Program Guidelines Review Committee members can also join workgroups.

Members expressed interest in the workgroups.

One policy analyst will be assigned to each workgroup for setting meetings and taking notes. The workgroup will need a volunteer for facilitating. We will continue to post and record these meetings. Individual workgroups will decide if those will be recorded or not. These meetings aren't for case specific information. Minutes from workgroups will be posted. We will get a suggested list of workgroup members to share.

Judge Raines asked about the high cost of child care. This topic will be added to a future Guidelines Advisory Committee meeting.

Child Attending School rules were brought up and will be added to next agenda for discussion. Kate mentioned that this committee can only make updates to Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR), but if a statutory change is needed, it can be noted. Linda clarified that her question was regarding the way support is calculated for a child attending school, not the statutory process.

**Teams Channel Walk-Through**

**Marci Hamilton**

The Teams channel was shared, including where the files are located and how it can be used for the workgroups and committee. Dawn explained that documents in the channel are considered public records.

**Future Meeting Schedule**

**Dawn Marquardt**

The decision was made to have the full committee meetings on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month from 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Invites will be sent and will be recurring for a year.

Action Items:

- Add policy papers to the public website
- Post membership list to the public website
- Add child care costs and calculating support for a child attending school to the next Committee agenda
- Schedule recurring meetings