

COURT COVERAGE POLICY

	DIVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES Community Services STATEWIDE POLICY
SUBJECT:	YOUTH PAROLE BUREAU COURT COVERAGE
POLICY NUMBER:	DCFS/JJ 500.16
EFFECTIVE DATE:	8/12/19
APPROVED BY:	Kathryn Roose, Deputy Administrator – Division of Child and Family Services
DATE:	
SUPERSEDES:	None
APPROVED BY:	Ross Armstrong, Administrator – Division of Child and Family Services
DATE:	
REFERENCES:	
ATTACHMENTS:	Court Observation Sheet

I. POLICY

The Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), Juvenile Justice Services, shall utilize a consistent process for staff representation of DCFS recommendations when attending court.

II. PURPOSE

This policy establishes how DCFS Youth Parole Bureau staff shall prepare for and conduct themselves in Court appearances.

III. DEFINITIONS

As used in this document, the following definitions shall apply:

- A. Family: A youth's family is the group of individuals who support a youth emotionally, physically, and financially. A family is defined by its members and each family defines itself. A family can include individuals of various ages who are biologically related, related by marriage, or not related at all.

IV. PRACTICE GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

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A. Ensuring Court Coverage

1. Scheduled court hearings shall be reviewed daily in the morning briefings.
2. It is each Youth Parole Counselor's (YPC) responsibility to ensure a representative from the DCFS Youth Parole Bureau (YPB) is in attendance at each court hearing for youth on their caseload, and that person has the information needed to adequately represent the DCFS YPB updates and recommendations to the court.
3. Unit Managers may determine that coverage of a court case requires additional DCFS staff to fully represent DCFS' position on any case. In such a case, the Unit Manager will assign additional staff as necessary.
4. When the DCFS YPB is recommending revocation or termination, the assigned YPC must attend those hearings unless there is an unavoidable conflict, in which case a Unit Manager shall attend the hearing.

B. Court Appearance

1. All DCFS YPB staff are expected to follow the guidelines for the court jurisdiction they will be attending, or the HHS DCFS Personal Appearance Policy (whichever is more formal), when attending court. Casual dress days do not apply to court.
2. All Youth Parole Bureau staff are expected to arrive at the courthouse where the hearing is taking place no later than 15 minutes prior to the set hearing time.

C. Court Preparation

1. Prior to each court hearing YPB staff attending court must be prepared to adequately represent recommendations to the court. Preparation may include, but is not limited to:
 1. Review of the Court Coverage Form and case file when applicable;
 2. Receiving updates from the youth, family, case workers, and/or service providers;
 3. Ensuring any and all activities that were required from the last court hearing are completed or updates are prepared for the court;
 4. Contacting attorneys on the case to be aware of any key issues expected to be discussed during the hearing.
2. The YPB staff attending the hearing must have accurate knowledge of the following information:
 1. Current physical placement;
 2. Relevant Youth Level of Service (YLS) information relating to risk level and services;
 3. Current case plan;
 4. Compliance with substance abuse treatment, mental health counseling, medication management, employment, educational programming, and Juvenile Sex Offender treatment, if applicable;
 5. Relevant family factors impacting youth performance on parole, including level of family engagement;
 6. Current list of treatment providers and progress in treatment;
 7. Education status;
 8. The nature of the offense for which the youth is on parole;
 9. The nature of the offense or offenses with which the youth is newly charged, if any;
 10. The likelihood of the youth's and parent's appearance at the next hearing if not held in custody (if applicable);
 11. Recommendations of the assigned YPC;

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12. If revocation is being recommended, sufficient information to make representations as required by [NRS 63.780](#); and
 13. Any additional information helpful to make recommendations and representations to the court.
3. Unit Managers will review the Court Coverage Form two days prior to the court hearing. If the Unit Manager finds that the Court Coverage Form is inadequate, the Unit Manager will have the discretion to mandate that the youth's YPC attend the court hearing.

V. COURT APPEARANCE MONITORING

A. Quarterly Monitoring Required

1. The Chief of the Youth Parole Bureau shall be responsible for ensuring Unit Managers observe each of the YPCs they supervise in court at least once a quarter. The observation shall be documented on the Court Observation Sheet.
2. Trends in court performance will be reviewed by YPB leadership each quarter and additional training and/or changes to practice will be implemented as needed.
3. Observation may occur in person or by viewing recorded court proceedings.
4. The observation should note YPC performance related to:
 - a. Possessing adequate information on the court coverage form to represent the case and answer the court's questions;
 - b. Responsiveness to court or stakeholder questions and concerns;
 - c. Problem solving;
 - d. Professionalism; and
 - e. Proper Preparation and documentation.

- B. Upon complaint by any court stakeholder of a YPC court performance, the supervisor shall observe the YPC in court at the next hearing in which they appear and review the recorded court proceedings that triggered the complaint immediately. The findings will be used to provide the YPC with feedback, adjustments to their presentation and additional training as necessary.

C. Annual Stakeholder Feedback Required

1. On or before September 1 of each calendar year, the Youth Parole Bureau shall survey stakeholders to measure satisfaction with YPB court appearances. The survey shall measure the requirements of this policy. Different jurisdictions may receive different surveys based on localized practice, concerns, or system goals.

VI. PROCEDURES

The Youth Parole Bureau shall adopt and maintain procedures consistent with this policy including but not limited to completion of Court Coverage Forms, coordinating with facilities for information needed for court, and the communication of sensitive information. The SOP shall have a Court Coverage Form as an attachment.