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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 23, 2024

(Little Rock, Arkansas) – The Arkansas Court Improvement Program is proud to announce the publication of “Guidebook for Families: Understanding Dependency Neglect Court.”

“We want to ensure our court-involved families have the resources they need to understand the child welfare system in Arkansas.” said Brooke Steen, Juvenile Division Director at the Administrative Office of the Courts. Brooke also serves as the State Director for the Court Improvement Program.

The book guides families through the dependency-neglect court process. The Guidebook walks families through each step of their case by explaining terminology, timelines, types of hearings, and the people that will be involved in their case. There is a calendar and areas for notes throughout the book so that parents can have all relevant information in one place.

“In 2000, the original guidebook for dependency neglect court was developed by one of our beloved juvenile judges, Judge Joyce Warren, who has since retired. With her blessing, the Court Improvement Program, along with the assistance and support of many stakeholders, successfully revised and published the Guidebook for Families to better serve our families,” said Brooke. “I want to especially recognize DCFS, the Commission for Parent Counsel, the Attorney Ad Litem Program, Arkansas CASA, and the DCFS Parent Advisory Council for their work on this important project.”

The Arkansas Court Improvement Program provided copies of the Guidebook to all juvenile judges and attorneys present at their annual Children in the Courts Conference. DCFS is mass producing the Guidebook and will be shipping numerous copies to all courts with a dependency-neglect docket so that they can be provided to all families entering the child welfare system. The Guidebook is also available in English and Spanish at [www.arcourts.gov](http://www.arcourts.gov) so that stakeholders may print copies as needed. DCFS is in the process of translating the book to Marshallese, which will be added to the website upon completion.

For Further Information Contact:

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*ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS*



***“Supporting Courts,  
Ensuring Justice”***

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