



Kansas Courts News Release

Office of Judicial Administration

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 18, 2017

Contact:

Lisa Taylor
Public Information Director
785-296-4872
taylorl@kscourts.org

Appointments made to Supreme Court Permanency Planning Task Force

TOPEKA—Six people were appointed to the Supreme Court Permanency Planning Task Force, and a current member was reappointed.

Chief Justice Lawton R. Nuss of the Kansas Supreme Court appointed the members to serve four-year terms from July 1 through June 30, 2021.

New members are Kansas Court of Appeals Judge Kathryn Gardner; Norton County District Magistrate Judge Debra Anderson; Julie Ehler of Topeka; Sandra Lessor of Wichita; Jessica Nasternak of Topeka; and Daniel Martin of Topeka. Reappointed is Jeff Cowger of Topeka.

The working task force, established by the court in 1984, advises the justices on ways to provide and improve the care of children who are under the jurisdiction of the court. Its responsibilities include:

- developing and implementing a strategic plan for child welfare oversight
- collaborating with district courts, the Kansas Department for Children and Families, and Native American tribes in Kansas
- developing and implementing statewide legal training
- reviewing federally funded child and family services.

Overall, the task force recommends improvements and suggests programs that help children placed in foster care find safe, permanent homes as quickly as possible.

The 18-member task force includes district court judges; district magistrate judges; Indian tribal court members; state agency representatives; lawyers; court-appointed guardians; prosecutors; Court Appointed Special Advocates; members of Citizen Review Boards; and mental health, behavioral health, and substance abuse treatment providers.

Ehler represents the Kansas State Department of Education; Lessor is a senior district attorney; Nasternak represents the Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence; Martin represents foster youth; and Cowger represents the Kansas Department of Corrections.

State of Kansas
Office of Judicial Administration
Kansas Judicial Center
301 SW 10th
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1507
785-296-2256
www.kscourts.org