



# MICHIGAN COURTS NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Report Highlights Collaboration Between Tribal, State, and Federal Courts that Benefit Michigan Families**

MT. PLEASANT, MI, November 14, 2017 – Michigan judicial leaders representing state, federal, and tribal courts today released a new [report](#) highlighting their cooperative efforts to better meet the needs of Native American children and families. The report, “Michigan’s Judiciary Success Stories: How Tribal, State, and Federal Courts Are Collaborating to Benefit Michigan Families,” was released at a meeting of the Michigan Tribal State Federal Judicial Forum.

Priorities for the Forum include addressing child welfare issues and ensuring that our respective court systems are meeting the needs of Native American children and families in a way that is culturally sensitive and appropriate. In particular, the Forum is focused on making certain that courts are trained in the federal Indian Child Welfare Act (1978) and the Michigan Indian Family Preservation Act (2012).

“I am so pleased to be able to share this useful resource, which is really a celebration of what our courts have accomplished and what we continue to address together,” said Justice Bridget M. McCormack, who serves as the Supreme Court’s liaison on tribal issues. “I encourage judges and courts across Michigan—tribal, state and federal—to use this new report as a tool to educate our citizens on what these courts do and how collaboration across courts is essential.”

“By coming together, as we do through the Forum, our courts are better able to think—and act—outside the box in addressing issues that affect our specific communities and our state, as a whole,” said Forum Co-Chair Chief Judge Allie Greenleaf Maldonado of the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians Tribal Court. “We can step back and take a global view on how to improve the application of justice, and we can also zoom in on what other local courts are doing to address issues that might be very specific to our region.”

Forum Co-Chair Judge Timothy Connors of the Washtenaw Circuit Court, who presides over a peacemaking court in his county that was inspired by Native American courts, said, “Sharing perspectives, ideas, and different methods of achieving justice helps to enhance all of our court systems. I believe it also facilitates a more cohesive and respectful application of justice in all of our courts.”

The [report](#) features articles about:

- Michigan Tribal Judicial Forum Builds Trust and Spurs Cooperation on Child Support Issues in Southwest Michigan - Chief Judge Michael Petoskey, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians and the Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Pottawatomi Indians; and Chief Judge Susan Dobrich, Cass County Probate Court



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- ‘Ripple Effects’ of Tribal & Federal Court Collaboration Are Felt Throughout Local Community - Chief Judge Jocelyn Fabry, Sault Ste. Marie Chippewa Tribal Court; and Magistrate Judge Timothy Greeley, U.S. District Court for the Western District of Michigan, Marquette
- ‘Baby Steps’: How Two Northern Michigan Courts Built an Enduring Partnership That Sets up Children to Succeed - Chief Judge Allie Greenleaf Maldonado, Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians Tribal Court; and Retired Judge Frederick Mulhauser, Emmet County Probate Court
- Saginaw Chippewa Tribal Court Embraces ‘Spirit of Collaboration’ Inside and Outside of the Tribal Community - Chief Judge Patrick Shannon, Saginaw Chippewa Tribal Court
- Q&A about the Impact of Peacemaking Court - Judge Timothy Connors, Washtenaw County Circuit Court
- Court, Tribe, & State Agency: How These Entities Banded Together to Benefit Cheboygan Children - Judge Robert John Butts, Cheboygan County Probate and Family Court
- Pioneering Collaboration with Tribal Courts - Retired Justice Michael Cavanagh, Michigan Supreme Court

The Forum is comprised of judges representing each of Michigan’s 12 federally recognized tribes, 12 state court judges, and federal judges and officials.

Find out more about the Forum and tribal courts at [www.courts.mi.gov/tribalcourt](http://www.courts.mi.gov/tribalcourt).

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