

**Child Support Guidelines Advisory Committee**  
**Minutes**  
**Wednesday, November 19, 2025, 10:00 a.m. to 10:55 a.m.**

**Facilitator: Alexandra Popescu**

**Minutes: Erik Durant**

**Members:** Erin Biencourt, Donna Brann, Kelly Evans, Luciana Fontanini, Jeremy Gibons, Martin Herbest, Christine Hill, Trena Klohe, Sabrina Owen, Mike Ritchey, David Rivera-Vernazza, Amanda Thorpe, and Monica Whitaker.

**Guests:** Jason Chappell, Amy Croucher, Erik Durant, Annie Engel, Marci Hamilton, Alicia Mahan, Ashley Menke, Dan Meyers, Danielle Napier, Alexandra Popescu, Krista Smyth, Charlene St. Jules, Michelle Underwood, and Lori Woltring.

**Absent:** Heath Hattaway, Natalie Otero, Keith Raines, and Marisa Salinas.

<b>Call to Order</b>	<b>Alexandra Popescu</b>
Alex brought the meeting to order and conducted a roll call of the members present.	
<b>Minute Review and Approval</b>	<b>Alexandra Popescu</b>
The previous meeting's minutes were approved without edits. They will be posted on the public website.	
<b>Income Workgroup Recommendations</b>	<b>Luciana Fontanini</b>
<p>Lucci reminded the group that there were two recommendations from the Income Workgroup that were already brought to this committee. They previously put forward a recommendation to reduce the minimum order from \$100 to \$50. They also discussed the self-support reserve (SSR), which is currently at 116.7% of the federal poverty guideline, and recommended raising it to 130%. This is consistent with the federal income qualification for SNAP and aligns with the Center for Policy Research recommendation from the economic study.</p> <p>The remaining workgroup recommendations haven't been brought to the committee yet and are centered on alleging income for two scenarios: when someone is on TANF and when there is no income history. These are hot-button issues with program employees and are sometimes philosophically hard to explain to participants. There is often an overreliance on alleging generic income instead of actual income. There is evidence that when support obligations are higher than 20% of one's income, they are often less likely to get paid if at all. The group ran several scenarios with the newly recommended SSR and minimum order and with the updated scale from the economic study.</p> <p>The spreadsheet of scenarios was displayed for the committee. For each scenario, the number of children (2) remained the same. The first scenarios were for alleging income when lacking information for the paying parent. They ran the calculations using several incomes, including the SSR, 34 hours per week, 40 hours per week (i.e., status quo), and a mirrored calculation. Alleging the SSR would result in too many minimum orders. Mirrored calculations are terrible for low-income parents, but there is no way to mirror income if we don't know what someone is earning. The group philosophically liked what they saw with alleging 34 hours per week, which reflects the national average of hours worked across all professions.</p>	

This is something that could be more easily explained to participants. For the same scenario with the receiving parent, they are fairly consistent with what we are doing currently.

With this information, the workgroup is recommending that we adopt alleging income at 34 hours per week at the lowest minimum wage in the state where the parent lives when we lack income information for a participant. These orders are going to be quite a bit higher in general and we already had poor compliance rates, so we didn't want it to balloon any higher. We might see more impact as we reduce our reliance on using potential income, which maybe can be explored in the next review.

Amanda noted that sometimes they have income information about a party when an order is initially taken but not when a modification is taking place. Do we have the option to use the most recent income information (from the initial order) if no new information is found? Lucci responded that you could use the previous amount but that it is subjective based on their circumstances. It might not be appropriate to use the old income amount for someone who was just released from incarceration, as it might not reflect their true earnings. Amanda supports the 34-hour recommendation. From her experience with clients, they often have trouble finding 40-hour per week minimum wage jobs.

Mike added that he also supports the 34-hour recommendation. Currently, when we attribute 40 hours for a parent on TANF, when the other parent's income is significantly less than full-time minimum wage, it can end up flipping the obligation so that the custodial parent is ordered to pay. Reducing what we attribute to a TANF recipient will hopefully reduce the likelihood that this will happen.

Lucci noted that for parents receiving TANF, we always focus on receiving parents. This is because a parent on TANF is presumed unable to pay support, so we do not end up calculating support for a paying parent on TANF. For alleging income for these situations, we initially thought mirrored calculations would be most fair, but the data didn't show that it reflected reality. The scenarios are fairly consistent, but it made sense philosophically to use the same allegation that we do when we lack any income history. It is easier to understand and better reflects what a parent might be able to start earning if they started working. Therefore, the workgroup is putting forward the recommendation to also allege income at 34 hours per week when a participant is receiving TANF.

With no objections, Alex supported moving forward with these recommendations.

**Decision:**

- The remaining recommendations from the Income Workgroup regarding alleging income are formalized as official committee recommendations and will be incorporated into the recommendation report.

**Next Steps**

**Alexandra Popescu**

Alex explained that a design workgroup has been put together made up of Oregon Child Support Program employees to evaluate and determine impacts for implementing the recommendations. The workgroup kicked off last month, but with a tighter timeline to have the recommendation report finalized, we decided to pause the workgroup to focus on drafting the report. Several members of the Policy Team are taking lead on writing the report. The goal is to have the report done by the end of the month so that we can share it

with this committee in December for feedback before going to the director for review and approval.

Mike asked if the design impacts will be part of the report. Alex explained that high-level impacts will be included, but it will not be heavily detailed. Mike responded that the design of the calculator will be driven by the recommendations, so it may be hard to understand the work that is needed until the recommendations are adopted. Alex said that we are keeping the impacts accurate but general since we will not know all the details until the Design Workgroup works through these issues. Mike advised that the last report had a section about the calculator and that it was written very generically. Lucci added that we plan on including a few recommendations that have come out of the workgroup around the calculator, including making adjustments to the participant labels and reworking some confusing language.

Michelle U. asked if we ever received an answer from the courts if we can get rid of the parent designation altogether or if the alleged father piece is important to them for any reason. Mike suggested that as long as the calculators produce numbers that are clearly attributable to a particular parent, it doesn't matter what we call them. Donna said that she was hoping we could get rid of the requirement to pick a label altogether and allow the field to remain blank (or just have the participants' names). Jeremy suggested letting people fill in this field with whatever they want to call themselves. Michelle U. and Mike added that they have some concern about having a label that would be completed by one parent for the other; it could cause issues when the parents are not on good terms.

Chris advised that it does not matter overall from the court's perspective. If you want to satisfy the court, you could use "petitioner" and "respondent." Otherwise, the court would not care either way. Donna noted that sometimes people do not know if they are the petitioner or respondent. Trena added that from a practitioner perspective, it would be bad if the field is blank and there is no way to identify the parties. Donna added that it is important to keep the name as a mandatory field and let the labels be optional. Michelle U. asked if we need designations if we make the names mandatory. Mike advised that he could be convinced to not include labels, and several others agreed. Dani noted that we may need to be able to identify a caretaker. Michelle U. agreed that it might be important to identify a caretaker or the State of Oregon.

Alex briefly went over all the recommendations that the workgroups have proposed. The committee did not have any other comments. Alex suggested that if something comes up, you can send an email with feedback.

**Round Table**

**All**

David posed the question in the chat if we have explored the Area Median Income (AMI). David will share thoughts in writing and will send those to Alex and Lucci to review.

Amanda asked about implementation timeline. Alex advised that the due date for implementation is February 2027. The bulk of the work of the design workgroup will happen next year. Amanda was asking because she helps organize the Oregon State Bar's Family Law Conference, and this will need its own slot. The conference usually takes place in October.

Alex noted that there is no December meeting. The committee will stay in touch via email. If we need to meet again, members will receive another invitation.