

Community Relations Committee

Judicial Conference of Indiana

Meeting Minutes for Friday, February 7, 2025

The Community Relations Committee met on February 7, 2025, by video conference. The meeting was chaired by Judge Sean Persin.

1. **Members present.**

Polly Beeson, Kelly Benjamin, Lisa Berdine, Murielle Bright, Chadwick Hill, Michael Morrissey, Jason Mount, Cheryl Rivera, Emily Salzmann, Austin Shadle, Stephanie Steele, and Sean Persin (chair).

Members not in attendance.

Judi Calhoun (indicated unable to attend), Stefanie Crawford (indicated unable to attend), Aleksandra Dimitrijevic, John McGauley (indicated unable to attend), Bill Nelson, Lori Schein, and Gary Schutte (indicated unable to attend).

2. **Staff present.**

Adam Clay and Sarah Kidwell provided staff assistance.

3. **Approval of minutes.**

The committee approved the November 1, 2024, minutes.

4. **Cameras in court updates.**

Adam Clay briefly walked the committee through Marion County's system for Rule 2.17 information requests. Marion County uses The Record Xchange at https://marioncounty-in.trxchange.net/index.php?route=trx/marioncountyin_rule217. There is a main information landing page with overall details and specific guidance. The landing page also includes any request that has come in for Marion County along with details on the status. Other information shown includes how to submit a request, terms and conditions, and examples of the CCS. Anyone interested in more information can contact Adam for Marion County contact details.

Additionally, OCEO has updated a sample trial court decorum order to allow for Rule 2.17 for high profile cases. OCEO will send to committee for review with feedback requested to be sent to Adam.

5. **Constitution Day.**

Look for information in the weekly message in April about finding a school to speak at before the end of the school year. Contact Sarah with questions.

6. **IJA Excellence in Public Information and Education nominations.**

Chair Persin indicates that the committee should keep their eyes open for examples of good reporting that could be submitted for these awards. The August meeting will be for discussion of those nominations.

7. Judges Speakers Bureau.

OCEO (Cathrin Verano) sent out emails to those on the list asking for updated information. Once that deadline has passed, the online list will be updated and OCEO will message appropriate groups.

Judge Steele asked about a letter template to the school for requesting photos. Commission Shadle indicated that his school has a blanket approval. Chair Persin recommends keeping it on the agenda and thinking about it further. Chair Persin and staff may develop something for review.

8. County State of the Judiciary.

Chair Persin has been in contact with Grant County that has done presentations in the past. Chair Persin will share information, including a video and a PowerPoint presentation, with the committee. Grant County is not doing one this year but will present again in February or March of 2026.

9. Next meeting dates.

The next meeting dates for 2025 will be held via Zoom on Fridays at 1:00 p.m. (Eastern) on May 2, August 8, and November 7.

Respectfully submitted,

Adam Clay and Sarah Kidwell
Office of Communication, Education & Outreach

Community Relations Committee

Judicial Conference of Indiana

Meeting Minutes for Friday, May 2, 2025

The Community Relations Committee met on May 2, 2025, by video conference. The meeting was chaired by Judge Sean Persin.

1. **Members present.**

Lisa Berdine, Murielle Bright, Judi Calhoun, Aleksandra Dimitrijevic, Chadwick Hill, John McGauley, Michael Morrissey, Cheryl Rivera, Austin Shadle, and Sean Persin (chair).

Members not in attendance.

Polly Beeson (indicated unable to attend), Kelly Benjamin, Stefanie Crawford (indicated unable to attend), Jason Mount, Bill Nelson, Emily Salzmann (indicated unable to attend), Lori Schein, Gary Schutte (indicated unable to attend), and Stephanie Steele (indicated unable to attend).

2. **Staff present.**

Adam Clay and Sarah Kidwell provided staff assistance.

3. **Approval of minutes.**

The committee approved the February 7, 2025, minutes.

4. **Constitution Day.**

Sarah Kidwell indicated that registration opens in August through the weekly message, but that judges are encouraged to reach out now before school is out for summer. Chair Persin is hoping for 100% participation with the Community Relations Committee. Remember it's not necessarily on September 17, but any time on or around Constitution Day. In regard to Judge Steele's request for a form for judges to use to get permission for photos, Chair Persin investigated with his school corporation and found that teachers know which students have opted out of photos. John McGauley indicated that he takes photos and that he hasn't had any problems. However, John's photos highlight the judicial officer with typically back of students' heads. The Community Relations Committee does not adopt a form at this time, but suggests that judges discuss this issue with teachers or school administrators if they have concerns about consent.

5. **IJA Excellence in Public Information and Education nominations.**

Sarah indicates that the plan needs approval but will be open in June with an early August deadline. Chair Persin asks if the committee notices anyone that deserves recognition. Judge Shadle will be submitting a nomination for a specific reporter. Be on the lookout to make nominations.

6. **Judges Speakers Bureau.**

Sarah indicated that anyone who requested to be added to the Judges Speakers Bureau from the committee service email will be added once that deadline passes. Confirmation

will happen after that point. Community Relations members should already be on the list.

7. Cameras in Court Updates.

Adam Clay indicated that AR14 and AR 23 are out for public comment. The deadline to submit is Monday, May 5 at noon. The committee will not make a combined comment, but individual judges are invited to submit their own. Adam will circulate information on media compilations of county 2.17 policies.

8. County State of the Judiciary.

Chair Persin indicated that there is a template available with what Grant County has done in the past. Judge Bright is looking into this as something that would be done in Jennings County. John McGauley indicates that before the end of 2025 Allen County will have a video annual report. Chair Persin indicates that if someone develops a presentation, we should share with others, perhaps through the weekly message.

9. Other business.

Chair Persin reminds everyone to be careful in supporting local organizations if it seems too political and brings up ethical concerns.

John McGauley will have a powerful podcast coming up that is a testament to the impact of problem-solving courts.

10. Next meeting dates.

The next meeting dates for 2025 will be held via Zoom on Fridays at 1:00 p.m. (Eastern) on August 8 and November 7. All members are encouraged to attend the August 8 meeting, as the committee will be voting on IJA Awards.

Respectfully submitted,

Adam Clay and Sarah Kidwell
Office of Communication, Education & Outreach

Community Relations Committee

Judicial Conference of Indiana

Meeting Minutes for Friday, August 8, 2025

The Community Relations Committee met on August 8, 2025, by video conference. The meeting was chaired by Judge Sean Persin.

1. **Members present.**

Polly Beeson, Kelly Benjamin, Lisa Berdine, Murielle Bright, Luke Britt, Rebecca Buitendorp, Judi Calhoun, Stefanie Crawford, Aleksandra Dimitrijevic, John McGauley, Michael Morrissey, Patrick Ryan, Emily Salzmann, Austin Shadle, Stephanie Steele, and Sean Persin (chair).

Members not in attendance.

Chadwick Hill (indicated unable to attend), Jason Mount (indicated unable to attend), Cheryl Rivera (indicated unable to attend), and Gary Schutte.

2. **Staff present.**

Adam Clay and Sarah Kidwell provided staff assistance.

3. **Approval of minutes.**

The committee approved the May 2, 2025, minutes.

4. **IJA Excellence in Public Information and Education voting.**

Chair Persin noted the links provided on the nominations show a high level of commitment from many members of the press and judicial officers.

For the judge's award, the committee discussed the candidates, focusing on the candidate's impact and outreach in the community. The committee members voted and selected Judge David McCord as the recipient of the award for his efforts in establishing a Crisis Intervention Team in Henry County, along with his work with stakeholders and media to educate and inform the community regarding the CIT.

The committee discussed how the nominated journalists highlight the important work of the courts in large and small communities. The committee voted to recognize the body of work by reporter Mike Emery, a reporter for Western Wayne News. Mike has been a full-time journalist for 35 years, covering critical issues impacting the community and judicial system, balancing fairness to those arrested with the public's eagerness for information, and focusing on maintaining the integrity of the judicial process.

5. **Constitution Day.**

Sarah Kidwell indicated that registration is currently open and will close on August 22 at noon (Eastern). Celebrations can happen on or around September 17. Judges are encouraged to participate and encourage other judicial officers to also sign up.

6. **Next meeting dates.**

The next meeting for 2025 will be Friday, November 7 at 1:00 p.m. (Eastern) via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,

Adam Clay and Sarah Kidwell
Office of Communication, Education & Outreach

Community Relations Committee

Judicial Conference of Indiana

Meeting Minutes for Friday, November 7, 2025

The Community Relations Committee met on November 7, 2025, by video conference. The meeting was chaired by Judge Sean Persin.

1. **Members present.**

Lisa Berdine, Murielle Bright, Luke Britt, Stefanie Crawford, Chadwick Hill, Jason Mount, Cheryl Rivera, Austin Shadle, and Sean Persin (chair).

Members not in attendance.

Polly Beeson (indicated unable to attend), Kelly Benjamin (indicated unable to attend), Rebecca Buitendorp (indicated unable to attend), Judi Calhoun (indicated unable to attend), Aleksandra Dimitrijevic (indicated unable to attend), Michael Morrissey (indicated unable to attend), Patrick Ryan (indicated unable to attend), Emily Salzmann, Gary Schutte, and Stephanie Steele (indicated unable to attend).

2. **Staff present.**

Adam Clay and Sarah Kidwell provided staff assistance.

3. **Approval of minutes.**

The committee approved the August 8, 2025, minutes.

4. **National Adoption Day.**

Chair Persin asked about National Adoption Day participation and indicated that it's a good thing to do for awareness of foster children and adoption. Luke Britt noted that Marion County does participate. Sarah Kidwell mentioned that the Indiana Adoption Program was listed in a previous weekly message to help with gift bags. There is a standing order for broadcasting uncontested adoption proceedings, but most courts handle using Rule 2.17.

5. **Constitution Day recap.**

Chair Persin is excited to speak at the same school that he typically visits with media attending as well. J. Crawford enjoys seeing the elementary school students being able to relate to the Constitution and tried to enlist more judges to speak. J. Shadle had good discussions with the students over 2 days because of block scheduling and encourages the participating judges to bring a new judge with them next year. J. Berdine had a wonderful time and enjoys the engaging questions from students. Sarah Kidwell will be putting details about finding a school before the end of the school year in a weekly message come April.

6. **IJA Excellence in Public Information and Education awards recap.**

Chair Persin was very appreciative of the choices that this group made for these awards and encourages the committee to be more proactive in nominating media from their area directly. Committee to consider different ways of spreading awareness of the award

nominations.

7. Other business.

Adam Clay noted that the recent Legal Futures order mentions Community Relations. Chair Persin asks for it to be on agenda for next meeting. Staff will send committee links to the order and final report.

8. Next meeting dates.

The meetings for 2026 will be on the following Fridays at 1:00 p.m. (Eastern) via Zoom.

- February 6
- May 1
- August 7
- November 6

Respectfully submitted,

Adam Clay and Sarah Kidwell
Office of Communication, Education & Outreach