

## Introduction to the Manual

We are pleased to provide the 2019 edition of *Abuse, Neglect, Dependency, and Termination of Parental Rights Proceedings in North Carolina*. This Manual is written for legal professionals involved in these proceedings. The primary purpose of the Manual is to provide easily accessible information about the law, procedures, and concepts that apply to abuse, neglect, dependency, and related termination of parental rights proceedings in North Carolina. This Manual serves the additional goal of making the information uniformly available to a variety of professionals. It is meant to be a useful and reliable reference manual and training tool for judges, social services attorneys, parents' attorneys, guardian ad litem attorney advocates, and others involved in this important and challenging work. Because of the broad intended audience, advocacy materials and perspectives are not included; however, individuals and organizations with a particular advocacy perspective may choose to supplement the Manual with their own materials that are helpful to their work.

This edition is available in an online format and is housed on the UNC School of Government website, with its own "microsite" (or landing page). A reader may download (and print if desired) a pdf version of the complete Manual or any individual chapter. This edition updates the previous editions from 2017, 2015, 2014, and the first edition in 2011. A soft cover, bound copy of the Manual is also available for purchase through the "[Publications](#)" section of the UNC School of Government website.

The text of the chapters combines applicable statutes, relevant case citations, additional resources, and practical explanations for particular topics. This 2019 edition includes opinions published by the North Carolina appellate courts through December 31, 2019, and legislative changes made through the 2019 session of the North Carolina General Assembly. Throughout the chapters, "Practice Notes" are set apart to offer insight into practical aspects of a given topic; "Resources" are set apart to alert the reader to resources and tools beyond the Manual; and "AOC Forms" and "NC DHHS DSS Forms" are set apart to notify the reader of applicable forms that are created and updated by the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Division of Social Services (NC DHHS DSS). The Manual uses cross-references liberally to alert the reader to other parts of the Manual that are relevant to a particular topic.

There is a table of contents at the beginning of the Manual that identifies the location of general topics, and each chapter contains a more detailed table of contents. In the electronic version, readers may search for specific words by using the search function (such as "control f") on their computer or electronic device or the search box on the right navigation bar of the microsite. Web links are present throughout the Manual, typically embedded as a hyperlink in the relevant text. If a link does not work, the reader usually can find the resource by conducting an internet search using the title of the resource.

Appendix materials supplement topics covered in the Manual. Also included are Checklists, which are meant to be used as a tool to help a judge or an attorney identify required findings of fact or jurisdictional issues that should be addressed in the various court orders that apply to these proceedings.

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We welcome any corrections, suggestions, or comments. They may be sent to Associate Professor Sara DePasquale at the School of Government, CB #3330, Knapp-Sanders Building, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 27599-3330. You also may reach her by email at [sara@sog.unc.edu](mailto:sara@sog.unc.edu) or by telephone at (919) 966-4289.

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