

**KEY GOVERNMENT PLAYERS:**  
**Federal and State Agencies Involved in Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) Cases**

Multiple government agencies are involved with children applying for SIJS. These agencies represent different government levels, departments and responsibilities. Although their decisions affect one another, these agencies may not necessarily cooperate, nor communicate.

To help clarify governmental structure and responsibility, we have listed below the key federal and state agencies impacting SIJS-applicant children, along with Internet links to relevant organizational charts.

**A. FEDERAL LEVEL**

- a. **Overall Federal Government Organizational Chart:** The following chart displays the broad structure of the Federal Government. Note under the Executive Branch the Department of Justice, Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Homeland Security, each of which plays a role in the SIJS process for children in federal custody.  
<http://www.netage.com/economics/gov/Gov-chart-top.html>
- b. **Department of Justice (DOJ):** Within DOJ is the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR – bottom right). EOIR is an administrative court interpreting civil immigration law, and thus is under the Department of Justice of the Executive Branch of the Federal Government, rather than the Judicial Branch of the Federal Government. <http://www.usdoj.gov/dojorg.htm>
  - i. **EOIR:** EOIR oversees the immigration courts, where children in removal proceedings have their court hearings, as well as the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA), which reviews appeals of immigration court decisions.  
<http://www.usdoj.gov/jmd/mps/manual/eoir.htm>
- c. **Department of Health and Human Services (HHS):** Within HHS is the Assistant Secretary for Administration for Children and Families (ACF – top middle).  
<http://www.hhs.gov/about/orgchart.html>
  - i. **ACF/ORR:** The ACF Assistant Secretary's duties include oversight of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR – top middle). Since March 2003, ORR has held care and custody responsibility for unaccompanied children in federal custody for immigration violations.
- d. **Department of Homeland Security (DHS):** With the dismantling of the former Immigration and Naturalization Service in 2003, Congress created the Department of Homeland Security. Within DHS are U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS or CIS – bottom left) and the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (USICE or ICE – bottom middle).  
[http://www.dhs.gov/xabout/structure/editorial\\_0644.shtm](http://www.dhs.gov/xabout/structure/editorial_0644.shtm)

- i. **USCIS:** USCIS Field Operations Officers adjudicate the Special Immigrant application (form I-360), as well as the Adjustment of Status application (Form I-485) for children whose immigration court proceedings have been terminated. The Administrative Appeals Office adjudicates appeals of decisions made by USCIS officers.
- ii. **USICE:** The ICE office of the Principal Legal Advisor oversees the trial attorneys who represent the federal government's interests in immigration court cases.

**B. STATE LEVEL**

The dependency part of the SIJS process is adjudicated by state or local courts. The structure and name of these courts will vary from state to state, but they may be called juvenile, family, district, superior or circuit court. (Children in guardianship arrangements through probate court also should be eligible for SIJS.) As these systems vary from state to state, we have listed below a few links to state government or state court organizational charts, as examples of state court structures.

- a. **All States:** This site has a very simple court organizational chart for each state, organized alphabetically:

<http://integrationsolutions.westlaw.com/aca/west/statecrtorg.htm>

The National Center for State Courts provides basic state court structure charts:

<http://www.courtstatistics.org/>

- b. **Arizona:** Juvenile matters are handled under the Superior Court of each county. This site provides an AZ judiciary organizational chart:

<http://www.azcourts.gov/azcourts.aspx>

- c. **California:** Juvenile matters are handled under the Superior Court (sometimes called trial court) of each county, though juvenile court may be its own department within a county's Superior Court. This Web page gives a general description of the CA state court system: <http://www.courts.ca.gov>

- d. **Florida:** Juvenile matters are handled under the Circuit Court. In some counties there is a juvenile or family division of the Circuit Court, which handles dependency matters. <http://www.flcourts.org>

- e. **Michigan:** Juvenile matters are handled by the family division of the Circuit Court. <http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/publications/citizensguide.pdf>

- f. **Mississippi:** Juvenile matters are handled in Youth Court, which fall under either the County Court or Chancery Court depending on the County. <http://courts.ms.gov>

- g. **New York:** Juvenile matters are handled by the Family Court of each county. Family courts are within the Trial Court structure of the New York State Unified Court System. <http://www.courts.state.ny.us/courts/structure.shtml>
- h. **Texas:** Juvenile matters may be handled by County or District Courts. <http://www.courts.state.tx.us>
- i. **Utah:** Juvenile matters are handled by Juvenile Court. <http://www.utcourts.gov/courts/juv>
- j. **Virginia:** Juvenile matters are handled within the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court under each District Court. <http://www.courts.state.va.us>
- k. **Washington State:** Juvenile matters are handled by the Superior Court of each county. Many counties have a separate Juvenile Court division within the Superior Court. [http://www.courts.wa.gov/newsinfo/resources/index.cfm?fa=newsinfo\\_jury.display&altMenu=Citi&folderID=jury\\_guide&fileID=system](http://www.courts.wa.gov/newsinfo/resources/index.cfm?fa=newsinfo_jury.display&altMenu=Citi&folderID=jury_guide&fileID=system) [click on left side “About Washington Courts” and then “Washington Court System.”]