Acknowledgements

This second edition of Pennsylvania’s Dependency Benchbook benefited from the assistance of many individuals. The Office of Children and Families in the Courts would like to acknowledge and thank the Honorable Ronald D. Castille, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, as well as all of the Supreme Court Justices for their support of this Benchbook and dependency court matters in general.

We would like to extend specific thanks to the Honorable Justice Max Baer, whose tireless efforts to improve Pennsylvania’s child welfare system have significantly improved dependency court matters within the Commonwealth and have made this document possible.

We would like to express our gratitude to the membership of Pennsylvania’s State Roundtable for providing support and guidance for this Benchbook. In particular we would like to thank members of the Pennsylvania State Roundtable’s Education Success and Truancy Prevention, Dependent Children of Incarcerated Parents, Father Engagement, Legal Representation, Psychotropic Medication, Transitional Youth, and Visitation Workgroups for their many thoughtful contributions.

We would also like to thank the Honorable Kim Berkeley Clark, Administrative Judge, Allegheny County as Chairperson of the Dependency Benchbook Committee and all of the members of the Committee for their dedication and guidance over the many months of careful review and thoughtful revision. In particular, we commend the Committee’s vigilance in preserving the Mission and Guiding Principles for Pennsylvania’s Child Dependency System throughout this Benchbook.

We particularly want to express our admiration and thanks to the Benchbook Edit Committee, who contributed an enormous amount of time on weekly conference calls over many months to shape, write, review and edit the Benchbook’s content, as well as support adjustments to design and formatting.

Finally, we want to thank the many judges, hearing masters, attorneys, and child welfare professionals who will use this tool to guide practice and, in so doing, help the children and families of Pennsylvania on a daily basis.