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## **PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT**

*The Advocacy Institute Is Pleased to Present*

### **RACE EQUITY, CHILD WELFARE AND THE ROLE OF THE DAG: UNDERSTANDING AND ADDRESSING BIAS AND ACHIEVING BETTER OUTCOMES FOR FAMILIES**

**April 20, 2021  
2:15 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

## **INTERACTIVE WEBCAST**

### *Program Summary*

This program will provide an overview of the race equity and elimination of bias in child welfare work currently occurring within the Administrative Office of the Courts and local courts through the Race Equity Leadership Teams (RELTs). The presenters will discuss the issue of race equity and challenges the State is facing regarding racial inequities in the child welfare system, including their impact on children's placement, placement with relatives and permanency outcomes. The attendees will meet in small groups to discuss how race equity issues relate to their role as attorneys for the Division of Child Protection and Permanency. Deputies will become more familiar with race equity work in their counties and begin to gain an understanding of how they can use race equity considerations to assist the State in understanding and addressing bias and achieving better outcomes for families.

### *Eligibility*

This program is only open to Deputy and Assistant Attorneys General in the DCF practice group. Registrants will receive the course materials prior to the program date.

## ***Faculty***

**AAG Erin O’Leary** oversees the Division of Law’s DCF Practice Group with AAG Eleanor Armstrong. Prior to her current position, she served as a DCF DAG, arguing multiple appellate matters, including three NJ Supreme Court cases (YN, EDO and State v. Young). Previously, AAG O’Leary served as the Deputy Commissioner for the Department of Children and Families (DCF). In that role, she oversaw the Office of Legal Affairs and Licensing; Institutional Abuse Investigation Unit; Office of Advocacy; and the Office of Policy and Legislative Affairs. Prior to working at DCF, AAG O’Leary was a Deputy Attorney General initially assigned to represent the Division of Youth and Family Services and later assigned to represent the Department of Health and Senior Services and Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services. She has served as a guest lecturer at many universities and schools, and as an Adjunct Professor at Rutgers Law School. AAG O’Leary holds a BA in Speech Communication from Penn State University and a JD from Rutgers School of Law – Camden.

**AAG Eleanor Armstrong** oversees the Division of Law’s DCF Practice Group with AAG Erin O’Leary. Prior to her current position, she was an Assistant Section Chief in the DCF Essex Section of the Division of Law, where she represented the Division in both protective services and guardianship matters. She was previously a lead Deputy Attorney General. Before joining DOL, AAG Armstrong was in private practice, primarily concentrating in insurance defense work and federal railroad litigation. She served as a law clerk with the Honorable Amy Piro Chambers and the Honorable Glenn Berman in Middlesex County and graduated *magna cum laude* from Case Western Reserve University School of Law.

**DAG Michelle D. Perry-Thompson** is an Assistant Section Chief of the DCF South Section of the Division of Law. She manages attorneys in Atlantic and Cape May Counties who handle child protective service and guardianship caseloads and serves as the Attorney General’s designee on the New Jersey Children in Court Improvement Committee. DAG Perry-Thompson previously served as a staff attorney for the Study Commission on Violence, and prior to that, worked in private practice as a civil litigator. She holds a BSW and an MSW from Rutgers University and a JD from Temple University School of Law.

**DAG Diane L. Scott** is a member of the Division of Law’s DCF- Essex Section, where she represents the Division in both protective services and guardianship matters. Prior to joining the Division of Law, Diane managed a 10 million dollar budget as Project Manager for WINN, a subsidiary corporation of the New Jersey Redevelopment Authority. Diane graduated from Rutgers Law School-Newark and also holds an MBA from the USC Marshall School of Business.

**DAG Michael Thompson** is a member of the Division of Law’s DCF-Central Section, where he litigates the abuse/neglect docket and argues cases before the Appellate Division. He was previously an Assistant Deputy Public Defender with the Office of the Public Defender, where he handled DCP&P related matters. His first litigation job, prior to joining OPD, was also in the DCF Central Section of DOL, where he handled termination of parental rights and administrative law cases. DAG Thompson holds undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Richmond.

### *CLE Credit*

**NJ CLE Credit:** This program has been approved by the Board on Continuing Legal Education of the Supreme Court of New Jersey for 2.0 hours of Alternative Verifiable Learning Format (AVF) total CLE credit. Of these, 2.0 qualify as hours of credit for ethics/professionalism in the Diversity, Inclusion and Elimination of Bias category.

### *Registration*

Those who are eligible to apply should use the Zoom Webinar registration link in the Program Announcement email. Students who are registered will receive a confirmation email with a link to access the program.

**Students must download Zoom before the webinar in order for the AGAI to record polling responses that are required for attendance verification and CLE credit.**

The AGAI will be unable to verify attendance or grant CLE credit to students who have not downloaded Zoom before the webinar.