

TEXAS COURT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP)

**CASE MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING
GRANT APPLICATION**

JUNE 30, 2007



By
The Supreme Court of Texas
Court Improvement Program
201 W. 14th Street
Austin, Texas 78701



The Supreme Court of Texas

CHIEF JUSTICE
WALLACE B. JEFFERSON

201 West 14th Street Post Office Box 12248 Austin TX 78711
Telephone: 512/463-1312 Facsimile: 512/463-1365

CLERK
BLAKE A. HAWTHORNE

JUSTICES
NATHAN L. HECHT
HARRIET O'NEILL
DALE WAINWRIGHT
SCOTT A. BRISTER
DAVID M. MEDINA
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PHIL JOHNSON
DON R. WILLETT

GENERAL COUNSEL
LISA HOBBS

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
NADINE SCHNEIDER

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER
OSLER McCARTHY

July 6, 2007

June Lloyd
Administration for Children and Families
Dallas Regional Office
1301 Young Street, Room 914
Dallas, Texas 75202-5433

Re: Court Improvement Program Fund Case Management
and Reporting Grant Application
Log No. ACYF-CB-PI-06-05

Dear Ms. Lloyd:

I am pleased to request Federal Fiscal Year 2007 funding for the Texas Court Improvement Program Case Management and Reporting Grant.

This letter also serves as an assurance that the Supreme Court of Texas, through the Supreme Court Task Force on Child Protection Case Management and Reporting, will develop and implement a strategic plan of the programs and activities conducted under the grant.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Wallace B. Jefferson".

Wallace B. Jefferson
Chief Justice

WBJ/tda



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES

COMMISSIONER
Carey D. Cockerell

July 2, 2007

June Lloyd
Administration for Children and Families
Dallas Regional Office
1301 Young Street, Room 914
Dallas, Texas 75202-5433

RE: Court Improvement Program Case Management and Reporting Grant
ACYF-CB-PI-06-05

Dear Ms Lloyd:

I am pleased to write this letter of support assuring the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services' (DFPS) meaningful and ongoing collaboration with the Texas Supreme Court Task Force on Foster Care. DFPS and the Task Force, in cooperation with the Texas Center for the Judiciary, will identify and work toward shared goals and activities aimed at increasing the safety, permanency and well-being of children in the Texas child welfare system. This on-going collaboration will include scheduling and participating in meetings between the Task Force and DFPS, establishing concrete goals, monitoring and evaluating progress toward the achievement of goals, and jointly creating timelines for goals. The Case Management and Reporting Grant goals and activities submitted herewith are reflective of the collaboration that has occurred throughout the grant application process and that will continue during the period of any grant award.

DFPS supports this grant application and welcomes the opportunity to engage in this on-going collaborative process that will result in institutional and infrastructural changes that lead to measurable improved outcomes for the children and families Texas is serving.

Sincerely,

Joyce James
Assistant Commissioner for Child Protective Services

**Supreme Court Task Force
on Child Protection Case Management and Reporting
Members**

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Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

Version 02

* 1. Type of Submission: <input type="radio"/> Preapplication <input type="radio"/> Application <input type="radio"/> Changed/Corrected Application	* 2. Type of Application: <input type="radio"/> New <input checked="" type="radio"/> Continuation <input type="radio"/> Revision	* If Revision, select appropriate letter(s): <input type="checkbox"/> A. Increase Award <input type="checkbox"/> B. Decrease Award <input type="checkbox"/> C. Increase Duration <input type="checkbox"/> D. Decrease Duration <input type="checkbox"/> E. Other (specify) <input type="text"/>
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* 3. Date Received: Completed by Grants.gov upon submission.	4. Applicant Identifier: N/A
--	--

5a. Federal Entity Identifier: N/A	* 5b. Federal Award Identifier: <input type="text"/>
--	--

State Use Only:

6. Date Received by State: <input type="text"/>	7. State Application Identifier: <input type="text"/>
--	--

8. APPLICANT INFORMATION:

* a. Legal Name: Supreme Court of Texas
--

* b. Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN): 74-60000163	* c. Organizational DUNS: 010634140
---	---

d. Address:

* Street1: 201 West 14th Street
Street2: <input type="text"/>
* City: Austin
County: Travis
* State: Texas
Province: <input type="text"/>
* Country: U.S.
* Zip / Postal Code: 78701

e. Organizational Unit:

Department Name: Texas Court Improvement Program	Division Name: <input type="text"/>
--	---

f. Name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving this application:

Prefix: Ms.	* First Name: Tina
Middle Name: <input type="text"/>	
* Last Name: Amberboy	
Suffix: <input type="text"/>	

Title: Executive Director, Supreme Court Task Force on Foster Care

Organizational Affiliation: Supreme Court of Texas
--

* Telephone Number: 512-463-9352	Fax Number: 512-936-2308
---	---------------------------------

email: tina.amberboy@courts.state.tx.us
--

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

Version 02

9. Type of Applicant 1: Select Applicant Type:

State Government

Type of Applicant 2: Select Applicant Type:

Type of Applicant 3: Select Applicant Type:

* Other (specify):

*** 10. Name of Federal Agency:**

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services: ACF

11. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:

93-586

CFDA Title:

State Court Improvement Program

*** 12. Funding Opportunity Number:**

ACYF-CB-PI-06-05

* Title:

Court Improvement Program Fund Data Collection and Analysis Grant

13. Competition Identification Number:

Title:

14. Areas Affected by Project (Cities, Counties, States, etc.):

Primarily affects state courts with jurisdiction over child abuse and neglect cases, including the judges, attorneys, child welfare personnel, and other court personnel involved.

*** 15. Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project:**

Texas Data-Enabled Courts for Kids (TexDECK)

Attach supporting documents as specified in agency instructions.

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

Version 02

16. Congressional Districts Of:

* a. Applicant

* b. Program/Project

Attach an additional list of Program/Project Congressional Districts if needed.

17. Proposed Project:

* a. Start Date:

* b. End Date:

18. Estimated Funding (\$):

* a. Federal	<input type="text" value="555,257.00"/>
* b. Applicant	<input type="text"/>
* c. State	<input type="text"/>
* d. Local	<input type="text"/>
* e. Other	<input type="text" value="183,234.80"/>
* f. Program Income	<input type="text"/>
* g. TOTAL	<input type="text" value="738,491.80"/>

*** 19. Is Application Subject to Review By State Under Executive Order 12372 Process?**

a. This application was made available to the State under the Executive Order 12372 Process for review on

b. Program is subject to E.O. 12372 but has not been selected by the State for review.

c. Program is not covered by E.O. 12372.

*** 20. Is the Applicant Delinquent On Any Federal Debt? (If "Yes", provide explanation.)**

Yes No

21. *By signing this application, I certify (1) to the statements contained in the list of certifications** and (2) that the statements herein are true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I also provide the required assurances** and agree to comply with any resulting terms if I accept an award. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties. (U.S. Code, Title 218, Section 1001)

** I AGREE

** The list of certifications and assurances, or an internet site where you may obtain this list, is contained in the announcement or agency specific instructions.

Authorized Representative:

Prefix: * First Name:

Middle Name:

* Last Name:

Suffix:

* Title:

* Telephone Number: Fax Number:

* Email:

* Signature of Authorized Representative:  * Date Signed:

BUDGET INFORMATION - Non-Construction Programs

SECTION A - BUDGET SUMMARY

Grant Program Function or Activity (a)	Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number (b)	Estimated Unobligated Funds		New or Revised Budget		Total (g)
		Federal (c)	Non-Federal (d)	Federal (e)	Non-Federal (f)	
1. Court Improvement	93-586	\$ 555,257.00	\$ 193,235.00	\$	\$	748,492.00
2.						0.00
3.						0.00
4.						0.00
5. Totals		\$ 555,257.00	\$ 193,235.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	748,492.00

SECTION B - BUDGET CATEGORIES

Object Class Categories	GRANT PROGRAM, FUNCTION OR ACTIVITY			Total (6)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	
a. Personnel	\$ 41,667.00	\$	\$	41,667.00
b. Fringe Benefits	10,834.00			10,834.00
c. Travel	9,000.00			9,000.00
d. Equipment	3,596.00			3,596.00
e. Supplies	500.00			500.00
f. Contractual	489,670.00			489,670.00
g. Construction	0.00			0.00
h. Other	0.00			0.00
i. Total Direct Charges (sum of 6a-6h)	555,257.00	0.00	0.00	555,257.00
j. Indirect Charges	0.00			0.00
k. TOTALS (sum of 6i and 6j)	\$ 555,257.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 555,257.00
7. Program Income	\$	\$	\$	\$ 0.00

Authorized for Local Reproduction

SECTION C - NON-FEDERAL RESOURCES

(a) Grant Program	(b) Applicant	(c) State	(d) Other Sources	(e) TOTALS
8. Court Improvement	\$ 555,257.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 183,235.00	\$ 748,492.00
9.				0.00
10.				0.00
11.				0.00
12. TOTAL (sum of lines 8-11)	\$ 555,257.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 183,235.00	\$ 748,492.00

SECTION D - FORECASTED CASH NEEDS

	Total for 1st Year	FUTURE FUNDING PERIODS (Years)			
		1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
13. Federal	\$ 555,257.00	\$ 121,239.49	\$ 139,652.49	\$ 137,652.50	\$ 156,712.52
14. Non-Federal	193,234.00	48,308.50	48,308.50	48,308.50	48,308.50
15. TOTAL (sum of lines 13 and 14)	\$ 748,491.00	\$ 169,547.99	\$ 187,960.99	\$ 185,961.00	\$ 205,021.02

SECTION E - BUDGET ESTIMATES OF FEDERAL FUNDS NEEDED FOR BALANCE OF THE PROJECT

(a) Grant Program	FUTURE FUNDING PERIODS (Years)			
	(b) First	(c) Second	(d) Third	(e) Fourth
16. Court Improvement	\$ 555,257.00	\$ 555,257.00	\$ 555,257.00	\$ 555,257.00
17.				
18.				
19.				
20. TOTAL (sum of lines 16-19)	\$ 555,257.00	\$ 555,257.00	\$ 555,257.00	\$ 555,257.00

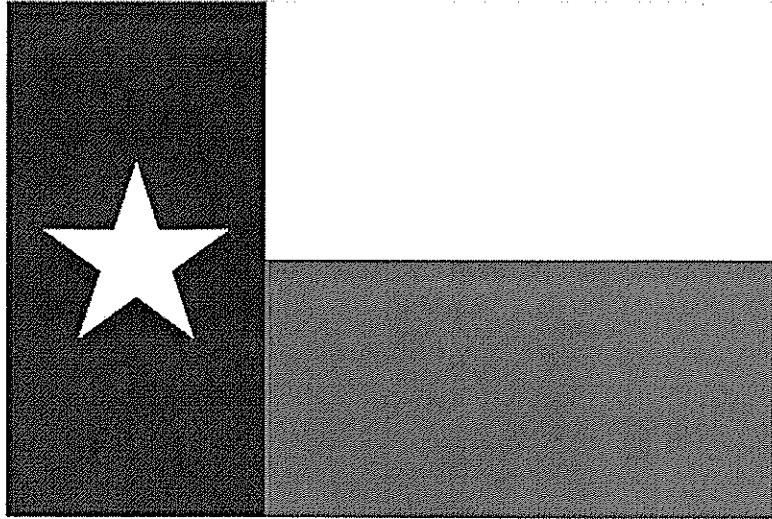
SECTION F - OTHER BUDGET INFORMATION

21. Direct Charges.	
22. Indirect Charges:	

23. Remarks: See Attached Narrative

Texas CIP Data Grant

	Total	Attributed to Federal Data Grant
a Personnel		
Grant Administrator	\$70,000.00	\$23,333.31
Executive Assistant (Match \$42,817)	\$0.00	\$0.00
Financial Analyst	\$55,000.00	\$18,333.32
Total Admin Personnel	\$125,000.00	\$41,667.00
b Fringe (26%)	\$32,500.00	\$10,834.00
c. Travel		
GA 5 Site visits/ year @\$500 ea	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
GA 2 Program Development Trips	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
GA 1 National Trip	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
1 GA Training	\$1,500.00	\$2,500.00
FA 1 Site visits@\$500 ea	\$500.00	\$500.00
1 FA Training	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00
Total for Admin Related Travel	\$9,000.00	\$9,000.00
d Equipment		
Computer, printers, misc hardware and software	\$3,333.33	\$3,586.00
e Supplies		
About \$300 per staff per year	\$500.00	\$500.00
f Contractual		
CIP ED 1/3	\$80,000.00	\$26,666.64
Director Fringe	\$20,800.00	\$6,933.33
Director Travel		
2 site visits*\$500	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Total for Director Attributed to Data Grant		\$34,599.97
IT Project Manager	\$86,500.00	\$86,500.00
IT Project Manager Fringe	\$24,652.00	\$22,490.00
IT Project Manager Travel and Training		\$21,000.00
National Conferences (3 @ \$2000)		
Training (2 @ \$2500)		
Site visits (20 @ \$500)		
Equipment - Director CIP and IT Project Manager		\$3,700.00
Total For IT Project Manager		\$133,690.00
Software Functional Requirements Assessment		\$122,320.00
2 Contractors to conduct follow-up site visits		
Site visits for Contractors (8 @ \$500)		
Data Grant Opportunities for Local Governments		\$199,060.03
Total Contractual		\$489,670.00
g. Construction	\$0.00	\$0.00
h. Other	\$0.00	\$0.00
i Total Direct		\$555,257.00



**TEXAS COURT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP)
CASEMANAGEMENT AND REPORTING
GRANT APPLICATION**

JUNE 30, 2007



By
The Supreme Court of Texas
Court Improvement Program
201 W. 14th Street
Austin, Texas 78701

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Texas CIP began with the federal program's inception in 1993. The Supreme Court of Texas (Court) appointed the Task Force on Foster Care ("Task Force") in 1994 to serve as an advisory body and to provide oversight to the CIP. The Task Force operates under multidisciplinary membership consisting of a wide array of stakeholders, including representatives from the Texas Department of Family & Protective Services (TDFPS), the University of Texas School of Law, Texas CASA, the judiciary, the Court, the State Bar of Texas, and the Texas District and County Attorneys Association. The Honorable Harriet O'Neill serves as the Court liaison to the Task Force.

The Basic CIP, Training, and Data Grants, and the active involvement of the existing staff for both the Court and the Office of Court Administration, have created the critical mass necessary for ambitious court improvement efforts. Community stakeholders have been actively involved in resolving transition and governance issues while also engaging the broader community of stakeholders.

Efforts are underway in Texas to create a Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families (Judicial Commission). In May 2007, the Court hired an Executive Director for the Task Force who will serve as the Executive Director of the Judicial Commission once it is formed. The Court anticipates that the Judicial Commission, which will be launched in September 2007, will be the Court-appointed body responsible for overseeing all three of the CIP grants. Many of the Task Force members will continue their highly valued, collaborative involvement in the new Judicial Commission.

The approximately \$2.2 million in Basic, Training and Data grant funds will be used to address the unique challenges faced by courts that serve to protect children and reunite families. Specifically, the Data Collection and Analysis Grant will fund the development and implementation of standards in system functionality and data interchange through the Texas Data-Enabled Courts for Kids ("TexDECK") project.

Since September 2005, the Court had designated the Texas Center for the Judiciary (Texas Center), a non-profit organization, as the entity responsible for the application, receipt, and accounting for the CIP grants. The 80th Legislature recently changed the Court's method of finance to include CIP in the Court's budget. The change in the Court's budget necessitates that the Court transfer the administrative duties for the CIP grants from the Texas Center to an in-house function.

A Transition Team appointed by the Chief Justice of the Court recommended that the Court hire CIP Staff and implement a transition plan that includes transitioning the CIP administrative duties from the Texas Center at the end of the Federal fiscal year, September 30, 2007. The Court CIP will receive FY2007 grant funds on October 1, 2007, and the Texas Center will transfer the surplus FY 06 funds on January 01, 2008, to complete the transition. In addition to hiring an Executive Director, the Court will staff the CIP with a Grants Administrator, a Financial Officer, and an Executive Assistant under the direction of the Executive Director. The Court also relies on the Staff Attorney for Children and Families and the Court's General Counsel for advice about the CIP.

II. The Strategic Plan for Use of FYs 2007-2010 Funding

(1) The Data Grant in context

In Texas, there are over 230 judges who hear child protection cases in 254 counties, in district and county courts. The sheer number of child protection courts, the manner in which these courts are funded, and the large geographical size of the state present real challenges in improving data sharing. For the most part, Texas counties bear the costs of maintaining courts within their jurisdictions. In fact, Texas is one of eleven states classified as having the most decentralized funding of trial courts¹. And having more county funding authorities than any other state, Texas may have the single most fragmented assemblage of trial courts in the U.S.

In contrast to states with more centralized court funding and administrative authority structures, Texas must develop a working data sharing and analysis model based on inclusive efforts at consensus-building and understanding how to accommodate the unique jurisdictional circumstances in 254 counties, which at the extremes, lie as far as 830 miles apart.

(2) Status of Current Projects

The Supreme Court received timely notice of the grant and award letter on September 20, 2006. A priority for the FY 2006 funds was to hire a project manager to manage the various projects funded by Data Sharing Grant. In September 2006, all CIP grants were administered by the Texas Center for the Judiciary (Center). Although the Supreme Court Task Force determined that hiring a project manager was a priority, it was determined that a Memorandum of Understanding between the Center and the Office of Court Administration was required to proceed with this task. The MOU was signed on March 19, 2007, and the IT Project Manager was hired on May 1, 2007. The projects are now proceeding and it is anticipated that they will be complete by the period stated in the original contract with ACF. A brief summary of activities for the three projects are:

- **Install IT Project Manager (Year One)**
The IT Project Manager started on May 1, 2007, and immediately undertook the efforts of moving forward with the projects identified in the FY2006 application and strategic plan. The manager has 22 years of state service, all at the Department of State Health Services. He served in a number of different roles in the Information Technology field from programmer to director. Supporting a wide range of programs at DSHS including Women Infants and

¹ Byrnes, Susan. *State Funding of Trial Courts: Minnesota's Transition Experience*. 2004. Pg 54. Available at http://www.ncsconline.org/D_ICM/ResearchPapers2004/Byrnes,Susan.pdf.

Children (WIC), Regulatory and Licensing, Immunization, Vital Statistics (Birth and Death registry), and Children with Special Health Care Needs.

- **Functional Requirements Study (FRS)**
The details of what the FRS will accomplish are set out in the FY2006 CIP Application and Strategic Plan. The first stage of the FRS effort has been achieved and an RFP has been issued. Two contractors will be hired to perform the surveys. The second stage of the FRS effort, which includes preliminary interviews is scheduled to start by August 15, 2007, and a final functionality report will be issued by March 31, 2008.
- **Judicial Webpage Query System**
As detailed in the FY2006 CIP Application and Strategic Plan, the plan to re-platform the Judicial Webpage Query System is underway. Initial contact has been made with DFPS IT department and the department has provided basic documentation and information regarding the infrastructure. A contractor has been identified by OCA to begin a full assessment and possible reverse engineering.

(3) Issues of focus for use of the FY2007 CIP Data Grant funds

- Texas will focus its data grant efforts on improving case management information systems on cases involving child abuse and neglect, foster care, and adoption and legal guardianship of children in foster care. Texas will use the data grant to support the implementation of "best practice" functional requirements to allow Texas courts to analyze their performance regarding child safety, permanency, procedural fairness, timeliness, and if practical, other aspects of child well-being.
- Texas will focus its attention on providing for automated data exchange between courts, the child welfare agency and other entities as required by Social Security Act, 438(b)(1)(A). Texas will also focus on developing policies and procedures that will assist court employees in the collection, exchange, and use of data in a more effective manner.
- Texas will focus its attention on assessing implementation on technologies at the local level.

(4) Proposed List of Data Grant Projects for FY2007

- **Task Force on Foster Care / Judicial Commission**
- **IT Project Manager**
- **Enhance the Texas Specialty Docket Court Management System (SDCMS)**
- **Continue Functional Requirements Study**
- **Provide opportunities for local governments to develop and assess technological improvements.**

(5) Key areas Addressed by Proposed Data Grant Projects for FY2007

- **Collaboration:**
Engage stakeholders in the development of best practice functionality that improves communication among all parties involved in child protection cases.
- **Standardization:**
Develop standard functionality and data interchange methods.
Provide resources to implement standards across child protection case management systems in Texas.
- **Court Performance:**
Assist in development of baseline case weights that provide courts with a tool for measuring resource needs and improvements in court practices.
Assess local practices that may be duplicated to improve court practices.

(6) Detail of Data Grant Projects for FY2007

Supreme Court Task Force on Foster Care / Judicial Commission

A portion of the Data Grant funds will be used to support the activities of the Executive Director (ED) of the Task Force / Judicial Commission. The ED will oversee all aspects of the implementation of the grant funds. Another major responsibility of the ED is to ensure that statewide collaboration on all CIP grants, and beyond, is conducted in a meaningful and ongoing manner. The ED will also advocate for projects that improve court performance and practices throughout the state.

IT Project Manager

A portion of the Data Grant funds will be used to support the IT Project Manager salary and fringe. The IT Project Manager will manage the IT projects and various contractors.

Continue Functional Requirements Study

Many of the activities scheduled for year two are dependent on completion of year one activities. Year two portion of this project will be reduced to bring completion dates more in line with the funding cycles of this grant.

In FY2007, the IT project manager will move to the second stage of the FRS which will involve processing the data collected from the stakeholder interviews in year one. The contractors will collate and analyze requirements identified in the interviews and field observations. They will then send the information back to the stakeholders for

reviews and comments. A summary of the information will be provided. The TexDECK project also will survey the Child Protection Courts to verify interest in modifications of the SDCMS (FY2006 project) to meet the requirements deemed most important as a result of the Functional Requirements Survey.

Grant Opportunities For Local Governments

The decentralized nature of the Texas court system requires CIP to address technology improvements at both the state level through the functional requirements study, the multi-county level covered by Texas' Child Protection Courts through the SDCMS, and through the local level by working with counties that provide technology and support to the court system. Applicants will be required to focus on establishing policies and procedures that will assist court employees, attorneys and child welfare agencies, and their contractors to collect, share, and use the data in a more effective manner. CIP will provide opportunities to local governments to demonstrate how technology can be used in the following ways:

- **Improving Court Performance in child protection cases -- to analyze performance regarding child safety, permanency, and wellbeing** – Potential subgrantees must be willing to undertake efforts to measure court performance in child abuse and neglect cases. Evaluation of court performance measures, such as those included in the Packard Guide and Toolkit, can establish methods to address increasing court accountability through enhanced performance measurements, and by assessing judicial workloads to ensure that judges have enough time to make timely, thorough, and well-considered decisions for children and families.²
- **Developing and implementing policies and procedures that assist court employees to collect and use data in a more effective manner** – Potential subgrantees must undertake efforts to assess the efficacy of implementing policies and procedures regarding the collection and use of case, child, and court specific data generated by child protection cases.
- **Developing and using specific tools and automating court functions, such as electronic filing, creation and printing of documents, electronic transmission of information to parties** – Potential subgrantees must undertake efforts to assess the impact of implementing new technologies that standardize and modernize court processes. An example would be standardized court orders and forms commonly used in child protection cases within a particular jurisdiction.
- **Collaborating on training on improving data collection and analysis**--CIP will collaborate on efforts that include trainings such as Building a Better Court and Fostering Court Improvement.

² Building a Better Court: Measuring and Improving Court Performance and Judicial Workload in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases, Packard Guide and Toolkit, pg 8.

CIP will develop a competitive process that allows local governments to submit applications consistent with the goals of achieving tangible, measurable, and time-specific outcomes for children and families involved in the child welfare system, as well as State purposes. The local projects will be reviewed in the context of how they augment and not compete with the statewide projects under this program. CIP will provide announcements and grant application materials as soon as practical after notification of funding is received.

(7) Collaboration with TDFPS to develop and implement the final strategic plan

Texas has a strong record of Court/Agency collaboration as described below:

- TDFPS and the Court review policy and procedures, share data and case analysis information, and explore opportunities to sponsor joint training activities at quarterly Task Force meetings.
- TDFPS has a standing place on each Task Force meeting agenda to provide training and information regarding the CFSRs and Program Improvement Plans (PIP), and IV-E Reviews.
- Active Task Force membership includes Joyce James, Assistant Commissioner for Child Protective Services, and Gerry Williams, TDFPS General Counsel.
- Task Force Training Committee Membership includes the Assistant Commissioner for CPS, two Judicial Officers, one UT Law Professor, the Texas Center's Executive Director, CIP Executive Staff, and the Supreme Court Staff Attorney for Children and Families.
- TDFPS and the Court jointly participate on regional conference calls in preparation for the CFSR Statewide Assessment, the use of Data in CFSRs, and CFSR On-Site review scheduled for March 2008.
- TDFPS and the Court have invited Texas' recognized Native American Tribes to participate on the Statewide Assessment Task Force and to participate in an interview with the CFSR Federal Team during Texas' last On-Site Review.
- The Court and TDFPS will identify the courts that have jurisdiction in areas where Native American Tribes exist, determine special needs of the courts in dealing with tribes and other issues related to child protection and foster care, develop contact list, and establish regional stakeholder meetings. Contact will be made with Urban Indian Centers for the same purposes.
- The Court's CIP Executive Staff, TDFPS, Office of Court Administration, and the Texas Center participate in weekly collaboration meetings.
- Judicial Commission Consultative Group membership includes Joyce James.
- TDFPS and the Court jointly participate in initiatives such as Texas Partnership for Family Recovery.
- Joint Court/TDFPS attendance at the National Judicial Leadership Summit in New York, March 8-9, 2007.
- Texas has established a Statewide Multidisciplinary Task Force on Case Management and Reporting, which holds quarterly meetings and includes the Assistant Commissioner for CPS, Judicial Officers, a UT Law Professor, the CIP Executive Staff, and the Supreme Court Staff Attorney for Children and Families.

- Ongoing collaboration with the CIP, Associate Judges for Child Protection courts, Presiding Judges of Texas' nine administrative judicial regions, The Supreme Court Task Force on Foster Care and the Task Force on Case Management and Reporting, Child Welfare Agency IT Staff.

All of the above efforts contributed to the development and future implementation of the final strategic plan.

(8) How proposed data grant projects will lead to tangible, measurable, and time-specific improved outcomes for children and families in the child welfare system

The activities Texas has envisioned for this grant project will give judges and the TDFPS better tools and information to track case progress. By creating a protocol for exchange and sharing of information, the judiciary and the agency will be able to work in concert to achieve tangible, measurable, and time-specific outcomes.

Determining the functional requirements judges need to track cases in the most efficient manner, coupled with technological improvements that provide for the immediate availability of information will provide judges and caseworkers with access to complete, instructive, and up-to-date information about children and families. Better informed caseworkers and judges can help ensure that orders rendered are considerate of the child and family needs, and are specific enough to direct parties in a clear and meaningful manner. The funding opportunities envisioned by the FY2007 Strategic Plan are also aimed at exploring new ideas of how a court environment can be enhanced in a way that allows judges enough resources to spend the appropriate amount of time on each case. Accurate and thoughtful information combined with adequate time spent will result in well-considered decisions.

When a court renders a clear, well thought-out order that is unequivocal in applicability to the parties, children will experience a greater possibility for safety and stability for their physical well being, mental health and educational fitness while in foster or relative care. In the short term, greater stability while in care leads to a stronger possibility for permanence in care and upon exiting. This naturally will result in greater well-being for the child overall. In the long-term, greater stability, permanency and wellbeing while in care will lead to reunification, adoption or legal guardianship sooner as well.

CIP will develop usage tracking and impact analysis of all programs funded. Any local project funded will be required to demonstrate program specific deliverables and measures to demonstrate impact. Much of the year two activities will be contemplative in nature. The end result is targeted to improve the ability of judges to make better informed decisions translating into safety, permanence and well being of children in the child protection court system.

(9) Court's meaningful and ongoing collaboration with TDFPS and other stakeholders to achieve outcomes, and continued stakeholder involvement with ongoing program implementation and evaluation.

To truly improve outcomes for children, all stakeholders must have access to state-of-the-art training and tools. The Court has detailed previously in this application its commitment to institutionalized collaboration. The collaboration surrounding the activities planned with the Data Grant will ensure that all stakeholders have such access and that institutional and infrastructural changes will result. The next CFSR, as well as our next IV-E Review will show evidence of improved outcomes.

In addition, the Court will continue to: (1) maintain a statewide multidisciplinary Task Force; (2) once formed, hold regular Commission meetings that will include representatives from the various groups mentioned in Section 7 above; (3) promote active participation by judges, the Task Force / CIP Director, and TDFPS in the CFSR process; and (4) ensure the visible and joint involvement of a Texas Supreme Court Justice and the Assistant Commissioner of CPS.

The Data Grant will be a vehicle to further institutionalize collaboration so that it truly becomes the best practices standard for the way child welfare is approached in our state. The judiciary and TDFPS are committed to ongoing communication with continual review and assessment of progress, successes, and barriers

(10) Proposed timetables for programs and activities

Year Two Timetable for Programs and Activities (FY 2007)

- Continue Project Management
- Continue development of Software Functional Requirements
 - Collate and analyze;

Year Three Timetable for Programs and Activities (FY2008)

- Continue effort to support and enhance SDCMS.
 - Conduct Fit-Gap Analysis;
- Begin process to enhance third party case management systems;
- Begin planning and development of Data Interchange Standards.

Year Four Timetable for Programs and Activities (FY2009)

- Continue effort to support and enhance SDCMS;
- Continue process to enhance third party case management systems;
- Continue development and implementation of Data Interchange Standards.

Year Five Timetable for Programs and Activities (FY2010)

- Continue effort to support and enhance SDCMS;
- Continue process to enhance third party case management systems;
- Continue implementation of Data Interchange Standards.

III. Strategic Plan Matrix

Issue to Be Addressed	Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Interim Benchmark	Outcome	Indicator
Supreme Court Task Force on Foster Care / Judicial Commission	Manage statewide initiative by promoting goals and agenda of the Task Force	Tina Amberboy	October 2007 – September 30	TF .commission meetings held, coordination of statewide program, integration of technology into local governments	Better coordination of technology	Minutes of meetings, summary of impact via annual report, summary of performance measures from the local governments.
IT Project Manager	Manage details of software functional requirements study.	Scott Jones	October 2007 – September 2008	Project activities are being progressed.	Functional requirements to track court improvements are identified and distributed to counties.	Deliverable of report on functional requirements
Software Functional Requirements	Conduct Requirements gathering sessions	Contractors	Aug 2007 – Apr 2008	Requirements sessions have been completed	Sessions are complete and documented.	Session documentation is complete and accepted.

	Collate Draft requirements	Contractors	May 2008	Draft requirements document completed.	Requirements are documented and ready for 1 st review.	Draft requirements distributed for 1 st review.
	Review Draft 1	Stakeholders	June - July 2008	Stakeholders review 1 st draft.	Stakeholder input on 1 st draft.	Comments received from stakeholders.
	Modify Draft	Contractors	July 2008	Amend draft with stakeholder comments.	2 nd draft is ready for review.	Draft requirements distributed for 2 nd review.
	Review Draft 2	Stakeholders	July - Aug 2008	Stakeholders review 2 nd draft.	Stakeholder input on 2 nd draft.	Comments received from stakeholders.
	Prepare final requirements	Contractors	Aug 2008	Amend draft with stakeholder comments.	Final version is complete.	Final version of requirements document is accepted.

Issue to Be Addressed	Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Interim Benchmark	Outcome	Indicator
Grant Opportunities for Local Governments	Request for Application (RFA) issued to local governments	CIP Grant Administrator	August 2007	RFA issued with 30 days for governments to apply	All targeted entities receive and application packet in time to respond.	Grant applications are received from counties
	Fair and neutral review process	CIP Grant Administrator	September 2007	Grants are reviewed and scored.	Projects meeting state and federal requirements are recommended for funding	Task Force awards grants
	Local governments implement programs	Subgrantees	October 2007	Contract terms and conditions are agreed to with local governments	The project descriptions are reflective of the intent of the ACF and CIP.	Contracts are signed and returned
	Performance measures are reported	Subgrantees	Quarterly	Measures are able to be reported as agreed	The measures demonstrate project specific outcomes of how the project meets safety, permanence, and well being.	Courts demonstrate actual change in the results of court hearings
	Develop local technology projects to improve court performance in child protection cases -- to analyze performance regarding child safety, permanency, and wellbeing	Local Governments selected by the CIP	October 2007	Programs will be operational and technology applied to the court process	The technology provides a method to track the outcomes	Send local program specific performance measures to ACF.