

TEXAS COURT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP)

**MULTIDISCIPLINARY TRAINING
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: 512/4631312 Facsimile: 512/4631365

CLERK
BLAKE A. HAWTHORNE

JUSTICES
NATHAN L. HECHT
HARRIET O'NEILL
DALE WAINWRIGHT
SCOTT A. BRISTER
DAVID M. MEDINA
PAUL W. GREEN
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 Training 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 Training Grant.

This letter also serves as an assurance that the Supreme Court of Texas, through the Supreme Court Task Force on Foster Care, 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. Cokerell

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 Multidisciplinary Training 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 Training 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 the training 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

**Texas Court Improvement Program
Supreme Court Task Force on Foster Care**

1210 San Antonio, Suite 800
Austin, TX 78701

Tina Amberboy, J.D.
Executive Director
Supreme Court Task Force on Foster Care
The Supreme Court of Texas
P.O. Box 12248
Austin, TX 78711
(512) 463-7455
(512) 936-2308 fax
tina.amberboy@courts.state.tx.us

Ginny Woods, J.D.
Grant Project Director CIP/CJA
Texas Center for the Judiciary
1210 San Antonio, Suite 800
Austin, TX 78701
(512) 482-8986
(512) 469-7664 fax
ginnyw@yourhonor.com

The Honorable John Specia, Chair

Plunkett & Gibson, Inc.
70 N.E. Loop 410, Suite 1100
San Antonio, TX 78216

(210) 734-7092
(210) 734-0379 fax
(210) 824-5969 home
(210) 621-3307 cell
speciaj@plunkett-gibson.com

The Honorable Stephen B. Ables

216th Judicial District Court
Kerr County Courthouse
700 Main Street
Kerrville, Texas 78028

(830) 792-2290
(830) 792-2290 fax
sables@kctc.com

The Honorable Marilyn Aboussie

(Retired)
112 W. Beauregard
San Angelo, Texas 76903

(325) 658-9758
maboussie2@earthlink.net

Cynthia Bryant

University of Texas School of Law
727 East Dean Keeton Street
Austin, Texas 78705

(512) 232-1574
(512) 475-8874 fax
(512) 970-2270 cell
cbryant@law.utexas.edu

The Honorable Mary Craft

Former Judge, 314th District
Judge, Three Rivers Cluster Court
111 E. Locust, Room 402-B
Angleton, Texas 77515

(979) 864-1895
(979) 864-1155 fax
(713) 818-4895 cell
marymcraft@yahoo.com

The Honorable Elma Salinas Ender

341st Judicial District Court
1100 Victoria, Suite 302
P.O. Box 1598
Laredo, Texas 78042

(956) 523-4329
(956) 523-5005
etse@webbcountytx.gov

Joe Gagen

CEO, Texas CASA
1501 West Anderson Ln.
Suite B-2
Austin, TX 78757

(512) 473-2627
(512) 473-8271 fax
jgagen@texascasa.org

The Honorable Hal Gaither (retired)

304th Judicial District Court
9876 Cherokee Trail
Quinlan, Texas 75474

(903) 356-9966 fax
(713) 983-9905 voice
(214) 850-5647 cell
besttexasjudge@peoplepc.com

Joyce M. James

Assistant Commissioner, CPS
TDFPS
701 West 51st Street (MC: E-557)
Austin, Texas 78751

(512) 438-3313
(512) 438-3782 fax
joyce.james@dfps.state.tx.us

The Honorable Guilford Jones

33rd Judicial District Court
Burnet County Courthouse Annex (North)
1701 E. Polk Street
Burnet, Texas 78611

(512) 756-5436
(512) 756-8478 fax
judge33@dcourt.org
coordinator33@dcourt.org

The Honorable Patricia Macias

388th Judicial District Court
500 East San Antonio, Suite 706
El Paso, Texas 79901

(915) 543-3850
(915) 543-3832 fax
pmacias@co.el-paso.tx.us
vvaldez@epcounty.com

David Montague

Assistant District Attorney
Tarrant County District Attorney's Office
401 W. Belknap
Ft. Worth, Texas 76196

(817) 884-1622
(817) 884-1667 fax
dmontague@tarrantcounty.com

Justice Harriet O'Neill

The Supreme Court of Texas
P.O. Box 12248
Austin, Texas 78711

(512) 463-1320
(512) 463-1365 fax
harriet.oneill@courts.state.tx.us

The Honorable Mickey Pennington

38th Judicial District Court
Uvalde County Courthouse #17
Uvalde, Texas 78801

(830) 278-3913
(830) 278-7502 fax
mickpenn@uvaldecounty.com

Shane Phelps

First Assistant District Attorney
300 E. 26th Street, Suite 310
Bryan, Texas 77803

(979) 361-4338
sphelps@co.brazos.tx.us

The Honorable Dean Rucker

318th Judicial District Court
200 West Wall Street, Ste 200
Midland, Texas 79701

(432) 688-4390 (Region Office)
(432) 688-4924 fax
ruckerd@co.midland.tx.us

Fairy Rutland

Director, Appeals Division
TX Health & Human Services Commission
P.O. Box 149030 (MC: W-613)
Austin, Texas 78714-9030

(512) 231-5717
(512) 231-5779 fax
fairy.rutland@hhsc.state.tx.us

The Honorable Robin Sage

307th Family District Court
101 E. Methvin, Ste. 463
Longview, Texas 75605

(903) 237-2534
(903) 234-3150 fax
robin.sage@co.gregg.tx.us

The Honorable Catherine M. Stone

Justice, Fourth Court of Appeals
Justice Center, 300 Dolorosa St., Ste 3200
San Antonio, Texas 78205

(210) 335-2635 ext. 2281
(210) 335-2762 fax
catherine.stone@courts.state.tx.us

The Honorable Brad Underwood

364th Judicial District Court
904 Broadway
Lubbock, Texas 79401

(806) 775-1021
(806) 767-9656 fax
bunderwood@co.lubbock.tx.us

The Honorable Olen Underwood

Presiding Judge, 2nd Region
284th District Court
207 West Phillips, Third Floor
Conroe, Texas 77301

(936) 538-8176
(936) 538-8167 fax
ounder@co.montgomery.tx.us

David Williams

San Saba County Attorney
500 East Wallace, Room. 203
P.O. Box 242
San Saba, Texas 76877

(325) 372-3747
(325) 372-5653 fax
attorney@sansabacounty.org

Gerry Williams

TDFPS, General Counsel
701 West 51st Street (MC: E672)
Austin, Texas 78751

(512) 438-3805
(512) 438-3022 fax
gerry.williams@dfps.state.tx

Ex Officio Member

Mari Kay Bickett

Executive Director
Texas Center for the Judiciary, Inc.
1210 San Antonio, Suite 800
Austin, Texas 78701

(512) 482-8986
(512) 469-7664 fax
mkbickett@yourhonor.com

Other Helpful Numbers

The Honorable Camile DuBose

Associate Judge
Child Protection Court of South Texas
38th Judicial District Court
County Courthouse
Uvalde, Texas 78801

(830) 278-3533
(830) 278-3017 fax
camile@uvaldecounty.com

Sue Desai

10254 Missel Thrush Drive
Austin, Texas 78750

(512) 257-8699
(512) 249-7296 fax
sdesai_tx@yahoo.com

The Honorable Judy Parker

Associate Judge
Lubbock County Courthouse
P.O. Box 10536
Lubbock, Texas 79408

(806) 775-1167
(806) 775-1196 fax
jparker@co.lubbock.tx.us

Carl Reynolds

Administrative Director,
Office of Court Administration
P.O. Box 12066
Austin, Texas 78711-2066

512.463.1625
512.463-1648 fax
carl.reynolds@courts.state.tx.us

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

Version 02

* 1. Type of Submission: <input type="radio"/> Preapplication <input checked="" 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"/>
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

* 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"/>
--------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------

B. APPLICANT INFORMATION:

* a. Legal Name: Supreme Court of Texas

* b. Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN): 74-6000163	* 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: <input type="text"/>

* 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:

*** 12. Funding Opportunity Number:**

ACYF-CB-PI-06-05

* Title:

Court Improvement Program Fund Training Grant

13. Competition Identification Number:

N/A

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:**

Court Improvement Program

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

* b. Applicant

* c. State

* d. Local

* e. Other

* f. Program Income

* g. TOTAL

* 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.

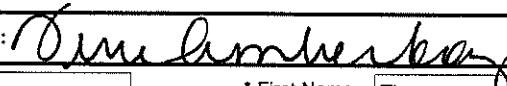
* 20. Is the Applicant Delinquent On Any Federal Debt? (If "Yes", provide explanation.)

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 INFORMATIC... - Non-Construction Programs

OMB App# No. 0348-0044

SECTION A - BUDGET SUMMARY						
Grant Program Function or Activity (a)	Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number (b)	Estimated Unobligated Funds		New or Revised Budget		
		Federal (c)	Non-Federal (d)	Federal (e)	Non-Federal (f)	Total (g)
1. Court Improve Prog.	93.586	\$ 100,000.00	\$	\$ 555,258.00	\$ 401,637.00	\$ 1,056,895.00
2.						0.00
3.						0.00
4.						0.00
5. Totals		\$ 100,000.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 555,258.00	\$ 401,637.00	\$ 1,056,895.00

SECTION B - BUDGET CATEGORIES						
Object Class Categories	GRANT PROGRAM, FUNCTION OR ACTIVITY					
	(1)	(2)		(3)	(5)	
a. Personnel	\$	41,667.00	\$	\$		\$ 41,667.00
b. Fringe Benefits		10,834.00				10,834.00
c. Travel		15,500.00				15,500.00
d. Equipment		3,586.00				3,586.00
e. Supplies		500.00				500.00
f. Contractual		483,171.00				483,171.00
g. Construction		0.00				0.00
h. Other		0.00				0.00
i. Total Direct Charges (sum of 6a-6h)		555,258.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	555,258.00
j. Indirect Charges		0.00				0.00
k. TOTALS (sum of 6i and 6j)	\$	555,258.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 555,258.00

7. Program Income	\$		\$	\$		\$ 0.00
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SECTION C - NON-FEDERAL RESOURCES					
(a) Grant Program	(b) Applicant	(c) State	(d) Other Sources	(e) TOTALS	
8. Training	\$	24,162.00 \$	377,475.00 \$	401,637.00 \$	
9.				0.00	
10.				0.00	
11.				0.00	
12. TOTAL (sum of lines 8-11)	\$	0.00 \$	377,475.00 \$	401,637.00 \$	

SECTION D - FORECASTED CASH NEEDS					
(a) Grant Program	Total for 1st Year	FUTURE FUNDING PERIODS (Years)			(e) Fourth
		(b) First	(c) Second	(d) Third	
13. Federal	\$ 555,258.00	80,624.50 \$	73,624.50 \$	198,624.50 \$	202,384.50
14. Non-Federal	401,637.00	100,409.25	100,409.25	100,409.25	100,409.25
15. TOTAL (sum of lines 13 and 14)	\$ 956,895.00	181,033.75 \$	174,033.75 \$	299,033.75 \$	302,793.75

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. Training	\$ 555,258.00	555,258.00 \$	555,258.00 \$	555,258.00 \$	555,258.00
17.					
18.					
19.					
20. TOTAL (sum of lines 16-19)	\$ 555,258.00	555,258.00 \$	555,258.00 \$	555,258.00 \$	555,258.00

SECTION F - OTHER BUDGET INFORMATION	
21. Direct Charges:	22. Indirect Charges:
23. Remarks: See grant budget detail forms attached	

Texas CIP Training Grant

Budget Narrative

e Supplies	\$500.00	\$500.00
Paper, office supplies, and misc office expenses		
f Contractual		
CIP Director 1/3 Time promoting Task Force/ Judicial Commission agenda	\$80,000.00	\$26,666.64
Director Fringe (26%)	\$20,800.00	\$6,933.33
Director Travel		
3 site visits*\$500	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00
1 National events/year * 3000	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00
1 Training related training per year	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00
1 CLE Training	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00
Total for Director Attributed to Training		\$42,600.00
Training Attorney 9 months	\$45,000.00	\$45,000.00
Training Attorney Fringe (26%)	\$11,700.00	\$11,700.00
Training - two site visits and one CLE Equipment		\$2,000.00
Training Attorney computer and equipment for training attorney. Will need server or contract for server and download site to distribute materials.	\$21,111.11	\$21,111.11
Total For Training Attorney		\$79,811.00
Office of Court Administration Child Protection Court Judicial Training		\$7,000.00
Texas Center for the Judiciary (multiple training)		\$353,760.00
Total for Proposed Training Projects		\$360,760.00
Total Contractual		\$483,171.00
g. Construction	\$0.00	\$0.00
h. Other	\$0.00	\$0.00
i Total Direct		\$555,258.00

SCHEDULE C
NON-FEDERAL RESOURCES 8.(d) OTHER SOURCES
EXPLANATION OF "IN KIND" CONTRIBUTION

Beyond the Bench Training – 75 participants

3 day training = 16 class training hours + 8 hours travel (est.)

Judicial Salary = 125,000 per year avg/2080 hours = 60.00/hr

Non Judicial Salary = 50,000 per year avg/2080 hours = 24.00/hr

Attendance: 1/3 judicial, 2/3 non judicial (average hourly rate estimated at 36.00)

$75 \times 24\text{hrs} \times 36/\text{hr} = 64,800.00$

Associate Judges Training – 100 participants

3 day training – 16 class training hours + 8 hours travel

Judicial Salary = 125,000 per year avg/2080 hours = 60.00/hr

Attendance: 100% Judicial

$100 \times 24 \text{ hrs} \times 60/\text{hr} = 144,000.00$

CPS Judicial Training – 125 participants

3 day training – 12 class training hours + 8 hours travel

Judicial Salary = 125,000 per year avg/2080 hours = 60.00/hr

Attendance: 100% Judicial

$125 \times 20 \text{ hrs} \times 60/\text{hr} = 150,000.00$

CPC Judges Annual Update – 15 participants

2 day training – 12.75 class training hours + 8 hours travel

Judicial Salary = 125,000 per year avg/2080 hours = 60.00/hr

Attendance: 100% Judicial

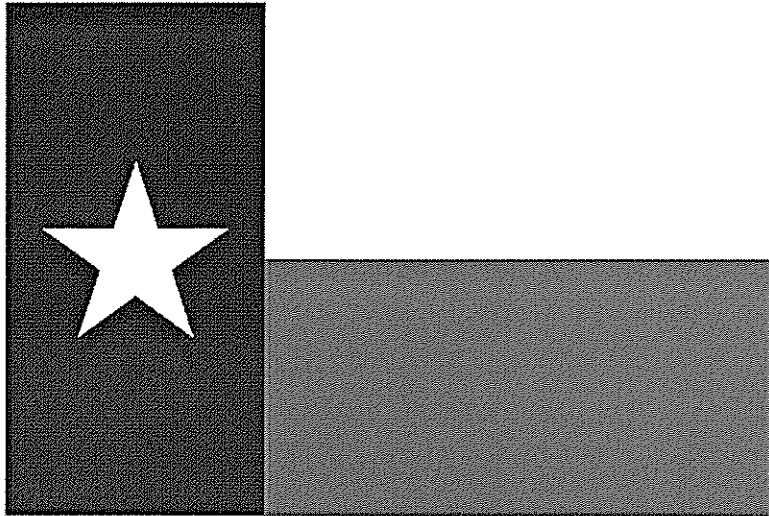
$15 \times 20.75 \text{ hrs} \times 60/\text{hr} = 18,675.00$

Other In-Kind

17,662.00 in salary for CIP Executive Assistant (paid by Supreme Court of Texas)

6,500.00 in salary for Supreme Court Staff Attorney for Children and Families

24,162.00 (paid by Supreme Court of Texas)



TEXAS COURT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP)

**MULTIDISCIPLINARY TRAINING
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 grant and the influx of 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 of the Task Force who will serve as the Executive Director of the Judicial Commission once it is formed. The Court anticipates the Judicial Commission, which will be launched in September 2007, and 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 Training Grant will fund training to support the judges, attorneys, and other legal personnel in decision making, case management, and interdisciplinary understanding.

Since September 2005, the Court has 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 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.

V. THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR USE OF FYs 2007-2010 FUNDING

(1) *The Training Grant in context*

Texas may have the single most fragmented assemblage of trial courts in the U.S. There are 231 judges in Texas who hear child protection cases for 254 counties across a staggering diversity of institutional arrangements, legal cultures, and political climates. The Supreme Court and its administrative arm the Office of Court Administration do not ordinarily have the resources to effect broad, systemic improvements in the administration of the trial courts. In the decentralized Texas context, training is one of the best behavioral change tools available. As noted, the CIP grants and other factors have allowed a more ambitious effort in the arena of child abuse and neglect cases.

(2) *Issues of focus for use of the CIP Training Grant funds:*

- Texas will focus its attention and training efforts to implement the Pew Commission recommendations by training judges in dependency court issues. The Pew Commission has observed that Judges who hear child welfare cases are charged with keeping children safe and making timely decisions to ensure that their fundamental needs are met at all stages of development.¹ This difficult work requires exceptional training in both the complexities of dependency law and the developmental needs of the very fragile children before them. State court leadership should actively ensure that every child's case is heard by an experienced, appropriately trained, and committed judge.² Texas will use part of the Training Grant funds to provide training to enhance judicial understanding of child development from infancy through adolescence as well as to promote understanding and respect for the complex and challenging jobs of caseworkers and foster parents responsible for children's day-to-day care.³
- Texas will also focus its attention and training efforts on issues identified through the Texas CIP reassessment,⁴ Title IV-E Reviews, strategies discussed in the 2005-2009 Texas Child and Family Services Review Program Improvement Plan (PIP),⁵ as applicable, the Statewide Assessment and activities undertaken in preparation for the 2008 CFSR, and training efforts identified and approved by the Training Committee.

¹ The Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care, *Fostering the Future: Safety, Permanence and Well-being*, page 46

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ Texas CIP Reassessment is on file with the Supreme Court of Texas

⁵ Texas Department of Family and Protective Services 2005 Data Book, available online at www.dfps.state.tx.us

(3) Proposed List of CIP Training Grant projects

- **Judicial Education**
 - Beyond the Bench
 - Associate Judges Training
 - CPS Judges Training
 - Child Protection Court Judges Annual Update

- **Legal Representation and Attorney Ad Litem (AAL) Education**
 - Advocate Academy
 - Training Library
 - Best Practices
 - Form State Bar Committee
 - Statewide AAL Meeting by year 5
 - Statewide Child Welfare Certification for Attorneys ad Litem

- **Cross-disciplinary Topics – In collaboration with the Child Welfare Agency**
 - Child & Family Services Review Outcomes & Measurements
 - Psychotropic Medications and Best Practices
 - Children’s Mental Health Issues
 - Educational Needs of Children in Care
 - Judicial Review of Medical Care
 - Foster Youth & Aging-Out Issues / Permanency Counseling & Adoption
 - Family Drug Courts
 - Immigration Issues
 - Ongoing CPS Organizational and Functional Issues:
 - Caseworker turnover
 - Importance of caseworker visits with child
 - Inexperienced caseworkers and Supervisors
 - Lack of tenure and experience within TDFPS
 - Caseworker Training Efforts
 - Increased numbers of children entering care
 - Local and Statewide Agency Response
 - Judicial Response
 - Family Group Conferencing
 - Ongoing Legislative Updates Following Sessions and in the Interim
 - Evidentiary Issues in CPS Cases
 - Termination Case Law
 - Innovative Practices
 - Mediation in CPS Cases

(4) Key Skills and Knowledge areas addressed by Proposed Training Grant Projects

- **Broad, Ongoing Collaboration:**
Engage in multidisciplinary education planning to promote cross training and create forums in which to discuss the complexities of the practice area with other parties and stakeholders involved in CPS cases.
- **Statewide Multidisciplinary Training:**
Collaborating with executive branch agencies, state bar and other external stakeholders in curricula development.
Providing resources and support staff to training grant recipients.
Support for ongoing training and information to judicial officers, attorneys, case workers, and other stakeholders through programs such as Beyond the Bench, Associate Judges Conference, CPS Judges Training, CPC Judges Annual Update, and AAL Training Program.
- **Court-related outcomes:**
Providing courts with information, technology and other decision-making tools necessary to address needs specific to child protection cases in a timely manner.
Providing courts with the skills and knowledge required to make timely decisions and produce tangible, meaningful outcomes for children in foster care.
CFSR, and Title IV-B and IV-E Issues.
Assist CPS Judges in sharing their experiences with colleagues in their regions or counties.

(5) Details of Training Grant Projects:

Beyond the Bench -- In FY 2005, more than 330,000 children in Texas were reported as victims of alleged abuse or neglect by parents or other caregivers.⁶ While CPS is a first responder to reports of child abuse and neglect, many other agencies and organizations become involved as the family navigates the complexities of the child welfare system.

Beyond the Bench is an avenue for creative problem solving, interdisciplinary brainstorming, and cross discipline communication between key stakeholders, such as legislators, judges, prosecutors, attorneys, educators, foster care representatives, child advocates, mental health/substance abuse professionals, and public health professionals. Planned by a multidisciplinary committee representative of all the key stakeholders, this two-day facilitated conversation provides opportunities to build and strengthen services to children and families by coordinating investigative, administrative and judicial responses to child protection. Beyond the Bench provides insight on best practices, enhances communication between the various stakeholder

⁶ Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Policy Handbook,

groups, and enables them to work more effectively together to meet the needs of Texas children involved in the child welfare system.

The format of each regional Beyond the Bench conference will remain flexible to allow each region to dictate the most effective method to address its unique issues. These regional Beyond the Bench conferences present an ideal forum where judges, attorneys, caseworkers, and service providers can share information with colleagues from their region and counties. This general framework will logically lead to more region-focused discussions about particular programs and specific factors that influence outcomes, such as services available to families, kinship care, family group decision making, substance abuse and mental health issues.

Associate Judges Conference -- Child welfare cases involve some of the most difficult personal, financial, and legal issues that can confront associate judges, who, in Texas, are the judicial officers who hear the bulk of child welfare cases. IV-D associate judges also hear petitions and motions brought by the Office of the Attorney General concerning paternity and child support establishment, child support enforcement, and other cases brought under the Uniform Interstate Family Support Act. Other judicial officers, i.e., magistrates and court masters, may also be involved in child welfare cases. Each year, the Texas Center plans and implements an Associate Judges Conference to provide educational resources so that all associate judges are well equipped to handle their difficult caseloads.

Of the 231 judges who hear Child Protection cases in Texas, the majority are associate judges. Children and families in the child welfare system will benefit from Texas' associate judges becoming educated on the topics offered at this particular training. Judges who participate in the Associate Judges Training will be better able to ask informed and pertinent questions of the parties representing children and families and service providers. Better questions will elicit more specific, relevant Orders.

The 2007 Associate Judges Conference is slated for July 18-20, 2007, in Austin and will include a pre-conference session, *Personal Safety and Security*, for TDFPS representatives.

CPS Judicial Conference -- In response to a request for guidance on best practices in CPS cases, the Texas Center, in collaboration with TDFPS and CIP Staff will conduct a statewide training open to all judges who hear CPS cases to address many cross-disciplinary issues as indicated in Section (4). The FY 2007 training includes dialogue on topics such as psychoactive medications in children, Texas' new healthcare delivery model, Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs), and how to use data collected by the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System (AFCARS) to improve courts' ability to make informed and timely decisions.

This training will be held in a forum where judges not only gain knowledge and tools that assist them in making decisions that adequately address specific needs of children

and families, it fosters candid discussion and allows them to share their experiences with other judges who hear this type of case.

Judges who attend this training will gain a better understanding of the importance of the CFSR, AFCARS, and the Title IV-E Review as well. In turn, orders rendered will further ensure that the recommendations of the latest CIP Reassessment, the CFSR Program Improvement Plan, and the Title IV-E Reviews will remain in focus.

Training Grant funds will be available in years 2 through 5 for CPS judicial training.

Child Protection Court Annual Update -- Texas uses Child Protection Courts (CPC), formerly known as Cluster Courts, to improve judicial oversight of CPS cases in rural areas. Due to the success of these child protection courts, the state legislature now provides state funding for their operation. CIP works with the Office of Court Administration (OCA) and the nine administrative regional judges to ensure that the CPC project remains state of the art. CIP Training Grant funds are available to provide training, equipment, supplies, and technical assistance as needed by the Child Protection Courts. With assistance from CIP funds, the OCA sponsors a two-day workshop for CPC judges who hear cases in 121 of Texas most rural counties. The 2007 Annual Update will cover topics such as CFSR, Grief and Loss from a Foster Child's Perspective, a 2007 Legislative Update, Best Practices in CPS Cases and Ethics.

Education about the CFSR, Legislative changes, and best practices in CPS cases enable judges to make rulings and institute practices that support child safety, permanency and well-being. Orders rendered will ensure these goals are achieved to the greatest extent possible because judges will have a better understanding of these issues, and why these measurements are important to the court as well.

Legal Representation and AAL Training -- The Court envisions two main efforts for developing and delivering AAL training – an ad litem academy, and a resource library within which training materials will be compiled, maintained and made available in written format, live training, and via the internet.

Texas law requires that as soon as practicable after appointment, an AAL appointed for a child “shall complete at least three hours of continuing legal education relating to child advocacy. . .” unless “. . . the court finds that the AAL has experience equivalent to the required education.”⁷ Additionally, the required continuing legal education must: “(1) be low-cost and available to persons throughout this state. . .” and (2) focus on the duties of an AAL in, and the procedures of and best practices for” a dependency proceeding.⁸ An AAL failing to fulfill his or her educational duty is subject to disciplinary action.⁹

⁷ Texas Family Code Section 107.004(b)

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ Texas Family Code Section 107.0045

As a matter of enhancing due process and safeguarding the best interests of each child, children and parents both need access to quality legal representation. Competent representation of all parties ensures the judge is hearing all of the information needed to make an informed decision that serves the best interests of the child. Due to the uniqueness of practicing in the child welfare field, attorneys need training beyond that which is available in law school.¹⁰

The Court envisions that attorneys representing children and parents will receive far more than the minimal three hours of continuing legal education relating to child advocacy required by statute. The Court seeks to establish an Advocate Academy (Academy), which would utilize either a contract or employee attorney trainer to develop free or low-cost training for new and experienced attorneys ad litem. The trainer would also develop a delivery model that would involve travel throughout the state to train attorneys locally, contracting with regional experts, when needed. In addition to developing CLE trainings, the Academy would create and maintain an online resource library; make training available over the internet; produce a video for public awareness and the recruitment of talented attorneys; and offer best practice guidelines.

As a result of this project, Texas will develop a pool of well-qualified attorneys to represent children and parents. Well-educated attorneys will not only assist their clients because they will be able to protect due process rights, they will advocate for appropriate and necessary services, and assist the child welfare agency and the courts in rendering clear, specific court orders.

Cross-disciplinary topics that will impact Court-related outcomes – The Court, in collaboration with the Child Welfare agency and other Stakeholders, will continue to develop training opportunities to address the issues listed in Section 3 of this application as well as other emerging concerns that potentially impact court-related outcomes.

TDFPS has established a training plan pursuant to Title IV-B and IV-E that will expand and improve caseworker training in all skill areas and provide advanced forensic investigative training to investigative caseworkers. TDFPS training plans include implementing a cultural competency training system titled “Knowing Who You Are,” “Undoing Racism,” Tablet PC training for mobile casework, training for casework aides and administrative staff, podcasts for caseworkers, web-based training on kinship and medical consent, advanced investigation training as part of caseworker certification, pre/post testing for basic skills development with new caseworkers, and forming local and regional training councils to identify needs and elevate issues to a statewide training council.

TDFPS can use outputs and outcomes to establish the impact of the trainings offered. For example, outputs could include: number of caseworkers trained, pre and post

¹⁰ The Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care, *Fostering the Future: Safety, Permanency and Well-Being for Children in Foster Care*, page 43.

training tests. Outcomes would include measurements assessing knowledge increase as determined by pre and post tests, and subsequent surveys indicating usage of information presented at training. Other evidence that the training is producing better trained caseworkers and investigators would be apparent in AFCARS data and CFSR results demonstrating that Safety, Permanency, and Wellbeing metrics have been achieved.

(6) 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, the Court and TDFS Contractors will collaborate on cross-training efforts aimed at supporting training opportunities for TDFPS Service Providers.
- 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.
- 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.

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

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

The activities undertaken with the Training Grant funds will improve the Texas child welfare system. Judges, attorneys, and DFPS Staff who participate in the training efforts funded by the CIP Grants will possess more knowledge that will assist them in making better recommendations and decisions for the children and families who come into contact with the child welfare agency. Informed decisions improve overall performance on the CFSR outcomes measures of Safety, Permanency, and Well-being.

CIP will use outputs and outcomes to establish the impact of the trainings offered. For example, outputs could include: number of judges, attorneys, court personnel, and caseworkers trained, number of locations where the training is offered, and subsequent follow up on specific issues, etc. Outcomes would include measurements assessing knowledge increase as determined by pre and post tests, and subsequent surveys indicating usage of information presented at training.

When Judges are trained on issues such as those set out in the strategic plan, they are better informed and become capable of asking better questions of the attorneys and caseworkers who appear in their court on behalf of a child. Attorneys and caseworkers who receive training on relevant and important issues pertinent to this type of case are more capable of providing quality information about their client. Understanding issues such as substance abuse, family violence, and mental health, identifying relative placements, sibling rights, as well as the community resources available to address a myriad of needs is critical in order for attorneys and caseworkers to make appropriate recommendations, and to the judge asking the questions. The advice of well-informed advocates and caseworkers allow an equally educated judge to render clearer and more appropriate orders. Orders that are based on informed recommendations result in greater safety and stability for a child's physical well being, mental health, and educational fitness. In the short term children experience more stability, which leads to a stronger possibility for permanence while in foster care, and upon exiting. Greater stability and permanence while in care will naturally result in a higher level of child wellbeing overall. Over the long term, children in foster care experience a decrease in time to achieve permanency of reunification, adoption or legal guardianship. For parents, a well-trained attorney, caseworker and judge, can help ensure compliance with family service plans and court orders. This, in the short term, helps ensure the stability of their children while in care, and in the long term, helps reduce the amount of time needed to achieve reunification, adoption or legal guardianship.

(8) 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 Training 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.

To summarize briefly, the Court plans to use the Training Grant as an instrument to facilitate and enhance collaboration to achieve better outcomes for children and families. The Training Grant funds, as part of the Court's CIP, will be overseen by a Training Committee that includes Agency, CIP, Court, OCA, UT Law School and Texas Center staff as well as members of the Judiciary. Training undertaken with the Training Grant funds will be planned and implemented through the Training Committee.

In addition, the Court will continue to: (1) maintain a statewide multidisciplinary Task Force; (2) once formed, hold regular Judicial Commission meetings that will include representatives from the various groups mentioned in Section 6 above; (3) promote active participation by judges, the Task Force / CIP Director, and TDFPS in the CFSR process; (4) ensure the visible and joint involvement of a Texas Supreme Court Justice and the Assistant Commissioner of CPS; and (5) jointly plan and implement judicial and cross-training initiatives.

The Training Grant will be used as a vehicle to further institutionalize collaboration, so that it truly becomes results in best practices standards 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.

(9) Proposed timetables for programs and activities

Year Two Timetable for Programs and Activities (FY 2007)

- Plan and implement one Associate Judges Conference;
- Plan and implement one regional Beyond the Bench Conference;
- Plan and implement one CPS Judges Training;
- Plan and implement one Child Protection Court Annual Update;
- Develop a training schedule and marketing plan on how best to promote and execute this training;
 - Hire an attorney trainer to develop CLE training for AALs representing children and parents;
 - Develop evaluation procedures for training;
 - Execute training at two sites;
 - Secure by partnership or purchase necessary computer software and hardware to implement web-based instruction and online alternative delivery methods; and
 - Develop basic and advanced topics for AAL Resource Library.

Year Three Timetable for Programs and Activities (FY 2008)

- Plan and implement one Associate Judges Conference;
- Plan and implement at least one, possibly two regional Beyond the Bench Conferences;
- Plan and implement one CPS Judges Training;
- Plan and implement one Child Protection Court Annual Update;
- Continue development of AAL training
 - Develop AAL training on advanced topics;
 - Establish relationships with local child protection teams to encourage the use of the AAL training and resource library;
 - Develop best practices to encourage local bar associations to establish local AAL sections;
 - Execute training in at least ten counties;
 - Develop alternative delivery products for use in isolated and sparsely populated areas of the state not served by on-site basic training; and
 - Initiate the process of becoming a State Bar Section.

Year Four Timetable for Programs and Activities (FY 2009)

- Plan and implement one Associate Judges Conference;
- Begin planning process for a statewide Beyond the Bench Conference;
- Plan and implement one CPS Judges Training;
- Plan and implement one Child Protection Court Annual Update;
- Continue development of AAL Training
 - Continue to update basic and advanced AAL training and make it available on the internet;
 - Continue to promote local bar section development;
 - Execute training in at least ten counties; and
 - Form CLE Committee to work on a statewide AAL meeting.

Year Five Timetable for Programs and Activities (FY 2010)

- Plan and implement statewide Beyond the Bench Conference;
- Plan and implement one Associate Judges Conference;
- Plan and implement one CPS Judges Training;
- Plan and implement one Child Protection Court Annual Update;
- Continue efforts to create a State Bar Section for Attorneys Ad Litem ;
- Explore National Association of Counsel for Children certification program, recognizing AAL as a specialty area of practice; and
- Plan and implement statewide AAL conference.

MATRIX

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR TRAINING GRANT

Strategy	Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Interim Benchmark	Outcome
<p>Educate the judiciary, attorneys, and other legal personnel involved with child welfare cases on multidisciplinary issues.</p>	<p>Develop and implement continuing education programs and materials for judges, attorneys, child welfare agency personnel</p>	<p>Court Improvement Program Staff in partnership with CIP subgrantees.</p>	<p>Beyond the Bench August 18-20, 2007 Annual Event in FY08, FY09, FY10</p>	<p>Conduct Regional Conference which holistically addresses a multitude of child welfare issues. Delivers cross training to approx 75 participants; 150 participants in FY08 with two BTB Conferences, and 75 participants in FY09 and follow up with previous 300 trained in prep for the Statewide Mtg in FY10.</p>	<p>Creation of an institutionalized and collaborative network on a regional level, leading to increased communication and holistic, cross discipline problem solving. Judges, attorneys and caseworkers are educated on relevant and important issues such as substance abuse, family violence, and mental health, identifying relative placements, sibling rights, as well as the community resources available to address a myriad of needs is critical in order for attorneys and caseworkers to make appropriate recommendations, and to the judge asking the questions. Orders will be based on informed recommendations resulting in greater safety and stability for a child's physical well being, mental health, and educational fitness. In the short term children experience more stability, which leads to a stronger possibility for permanence while in foster care, and upon exiting. Greater stability and permanence while in care will naturally result in a higher level of child wellbeing overall. Long term, children experience a decrease in time to achieve permanency of reunification, adoption or legal guardianship. For parents, a well-trained attorney, caseworker, and judge, can help ensure compliance with family service plans and court orders. This, in the short term, helps ensure the stability of their children while in care, and in the long term, helps reduce the amount of time needed to achieve reunification, adoption or legal guardianship. CIP will use outputs and outcomes to establish the impact of the trainings offered. For example, each region in which a Beyond the Bench is held will develop a 5 year plan addressing its own unique issues</p>

					<p>leading to institutional knowledge on improving Safety, Perm, and Well-being for children. Other outputs would include the number of judges, attorneys, court personnel, and caseworkers trained, the number of locations where the training is offered, and subsequent follow up on specific issues, etc. Outcomes would include measurements assessing knowledge increase as determined by pre and post tests, and subsequent surveys indicating usage of information presented at training. Another method CIP will be examining is the use of AFCARS data within the Fostering Court Improvement Program, which tracks child outcomes from the time of removal to discharge to assess behavioral changes within the judicial system.</p> <p>Beyond the Bench will contribute to better CFSR and Title IV-E outcomes as these training events are held throughout the five year period of the grant.</p>
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Strategy	Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Interim Benchmark	Outcome
<p>Educate the judiciary, attorneys, and other legal personnel involved with child welfare cases on multidisciplinary issues.</p>	<p>Develop and implement continuing education programs and materials for judges, attorneys, child welfare agency personnel</p>	<p>Court Improvement Program Staff in partnership with CIP subgrantees.</p>	<p>Associate Judges Training. July 17, 18, 2007 Annual Event in FY08, FY09, FY10</p>	<p>Conduct Statewide Conference for Associate Judges who hear CPS cases and Title IV-D Delivers judicial training to the largest group of judges hearing CPS cases.</p>	<p>Judges will be educated on relevant and important issues such as paternity and child support establishment, child support enforcement. Orders rendered will result in more safety and stability for a child in care because they help will address child support and paternity issues relevant to child welfare cases.</p> <p>Consistent use of clearer, better court orders benefit children and families in the short term because they result in more stability, which leads to a stronger possibility for permanence while in foster care, and upon exiting. Greater stability and permanence while in care will naturally result in a higher level of child wellbeing overall. Long term, children and families experience a decrease in time to achieve the permanency of reunification, adoption or legal guardianship.</p> <p>CIP will use outputs and outcomes to establish the impact of the trainings offered. For example, CIP could measure the number of judges, attorneys, court personnel, and caseworkers trained, the number of locations where the training is offered, and subsequent follow up on specific issues, etc. Outcomes would include measurements assessing knowledge increase as determined by pre and post tests, and subsequent surveys indicating usage of information presented at training. Another method CIP will be examining is the use of AFCARS data within the Fostering Court Improvement Program, which tracks child outcomes from the time of removal to discharge to assess behavioral changes within the judicial system.</p>

Strategy	Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Interim Benchmark	Outcome
<p>Educate the judiciary, attorneys, and other legal personnel involved with child welfare cases on multidisciplinary issues</p>	<p>Develop and implement continuing education programs and materials for judges, attorneys, child welfare agency personnel</p>	<p>Court Improvement Program Staff in partnership with CIP subgrantees.</p>	<p>CPS Judicial Conf Sept 4, 5, 6, 2007 Annual Event in FY08, FY09, FY10</p>	<p>In 2007, Statewide CPS Judges Training on CFSR, Psychoactive Meds, Mental Health and Health Care Issues, Judicial Review of Medical Care Other cross-disciplinary issues will be delivered in future FYs.</p>	<p>CPS Judges will possess knowledge about medical home for each child, best practices regarding psychoactive medications, and best practices to rule on other multi-disciplinary issues, and will gain a better understanding of the importance of the CFSR and the AFCARS, to enable them to make better informed and timely decisions.</p> <p>Judges are educated on relevant and important issues such as medical needs, psychoactive medications, substance abuse, family violence, and mental health, identifying relative placements, sibling rights, as well as the community resources available to address a myriad of needs is critical to render specific and appropriate orders</p> <p>Orders will be enhanced, consistent and more specific with regard to a child's physical well being, mental health, and educational fitness. In the short term children experience more stability, which leads to a stronger possibility for permanence while in foster care, and upon exiting. Greater stability and permanence while in care will naturally result in a higher level of child wellbeing overall. Long term, children experience a decrease in time to achieve the permanency of reunification, adoption or legal guardianship. For parents, specific, appropriate orders help ensure compliance with family service plans and caseworker recommendations. In the short term this helps ensure the stability of their children while in care, and in the long term, helps reduce the amount of time needed to achieve reunification, adoption or legal guardianship.</p>

<p>CIP will use outputs and outcomes to establish the impact of the trainings offered. For example, CIP could measure the number of judges, attorneys, court personnel, and caseworkers trained, the number of locations where the training is offered, and subsequent follow up on specific issues, etc. Outcomes would include measurements assessing knowledge increase as determined by pre and post tests, and subsequent surveys indicating usage of information presented at training.</p>							
<p>Another method CIP will be examining is the use of AFCARS data within the Fostering Court Improvement Program, which tracks child outcomes from the time of removal to discharge to assess behavioral changes within the judicial system.</p>							

Strategy	Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Interim Benchmark	Outcome
<p>Educate the judiciary, attorneys, and other legal personnel involved with child welfare cases on multidisciplinary issues.</p>	<p>Develop and implement continuing education programs and materials for judges, attorneys, child welfare agency personnel</p>	<p>Court Improvement Program Staff in partnership with CIP subgrantees.</p>	<p>CPC Annual Update Oct 14, 15, 2007, Annual Event in FY08, FY09, FY10</p>	<p>Child Protection Court Annual Update, including a legislative update, Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children, CFSR and AFCARS data</p>	<p>Child Protection Court Judges will have skills and knowledge to improve child protection in rural areas of the state. CPC judges will also be educated on issues such as the importance of the CFSR and the AFCARS, which will enable them to make informed and timely decisions.</p> <p>Judges are educated on relevant and important issues such as appropriate child placement, legislative issues, best practices, CFSR measurements and AFCARS data and how awareness of this data can lead to better orders and more efficient court operations.</p> <p>Orders will be enhanced, consistent and more specific with regard to a child's physical well being, mental health, and educational fitness. In the short term children experience more stability, which leads to a stronger possibility for permanence while in foster care, and upon exiting. Greater stability and permanence while in care will naturally result in a higher level of child wellbeing overall. Long term, children experience a decrease in time to achieve the permanency of reunification, adoption or legal guardianship. For parents, specific, appropriate orders help ensure compliance with family service plans and caseworker recommendations. In the short term this helps ensure the stability of their children while in care, and in the long term, helps reduce the amount of time needed to achieve reunification, adoption or legal guardianship.</p> <p>CIP will use outputs and outcomes to establish the impact of the trainings offered. For example, CIP could measure</p>

<p>the number of judges, attorneys, court personnel, and caseworkers trained, the number of locations where the training is offered, and subsequent follow up on specific issues, etc. Outcomes would include measurements assessing knowledge increase as determined by pre and post tests, and subsequent surveys indicating usage of information presented at training.</p>	<p>Another method CJP will be examining is the use of AFCARS data within the Fostering Court Improvement Program, which tracks child outcomes from the time of removal to discharge to assess behavioral changes within the judicial system.</p>								
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Strategy	Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Interim Benchmark	Outcome 1	Outcome 2
<p>Educate Attorneys who represent children and parents in CPS cases.</p>	<p>Hire attorney trainer Develop training and a delivery model Develop an online training library Develop best practice guidelines</p>	<p>Court Improvement Program Attorney Trainer</p>	<p>FY07: Hire Atty Trainer Develop training sched & Mkt Plan; Execute Training at 2 sites; Develop Basic & Advanced Topics for Atty Resource Library; Secure equip necessary to implement online delivery FY08: Develop library on advanced topics; Promote use of training and resource Library; Develop best Practices; Execute training At 10 sites; Develop internet training for sparsely populated areas; Initiate process of becoming a State Bar Section FY09: Continue to update basic and advanced AAL Training; Make available on the Internet; State Bar Section; Execute training in 10 counties; CLE committee to work on Statewide AAL meeting. FY10: State Bar Committee Efforts; National Association of Counsel for Children certification; Statewide AAL meeting</p>	<p>Establish training and delivery model, online library, best practice guidelines, secure equipment Advanced topics are added to online library; best practices are available; 10 sites are visited, internet training is expanded, State Bar Section is investigated Online library is continually updated and available via the internet; State Bar Section process is ongoing, 10 sites are visited/trained, Statewide Mtg is being planned. State Bar Committee is formed, NACC certification is available, Statewide Mtg is held.</p>	<p>AALs will identify specific needs such as medical, relative placement, sibling rights, visitation, educational, mental health, socialization, foster placement issues. AALs will possess practical legal knowledge about the laws affecting child abuse and neglect, and will implement best practices. Attorneys will make client directed or best interest recommendations that allow judges to enter orders for services and assistance that will benefit their client or parent client. New attorneys could access an online training library free or at very low cost. Attorneys have the option of joining a State Bar Section and/or becoming certified Child Welfare Specialists and attending a Statewide Meeting of AALs in Year 5.</p>	<p>Children and families will experience tangible, measurable, and time-specific outcomes in the following ways: Timely services and assistance to children and parents help ensure a child's safety and stability while in care, and also helps protect a parent's right to due process. In the short term this helps ensure the stability of their children while in care, and in the long term, helps reduce the amount of time needed to achieve reunification, adoption or legal guardianship. Achieving permanency for a family within a legal deadline is a standard that can be measured by the CFSR review. Also, outputs and outcomes could include pre and post training surveys and post representation surveys of AALs</p>

Strategy	Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Interim Benchmark	Outcome
<p>Demonstrate how collaboration with the State child welfare agency resulted in a final strategic plan</p>	<p>Quarterly Task Force Meetings to review policy and procedures, share data and case analysis information, explore opportunities to engage in joint training;</p> <p>Weekly "Collaboration Meetings" with Court CIP Executive Staff, DFPS, Office of Court Administration, and the Texas Center;</p> <p>Joint Court/DFPS participation in initiatives such as Texas Partnership for Family Recovery</p> <p>Joint Court/DFPS attendance at various meetings in Austin and all over the country dealing with CIP and CFSR outcomes.</p>	<p>Court and DFPS</p>	<p>Ongoing throughout FY 2006-07, and will continue throughout FYs 2008 – 2010.</p>	<p>Final Strategic Plan based on ongoing collaboration with the child welfare agency and other stakeholders.</p>	<p>Final Strategic Plan</p>

Strategy	Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Interim Benchmark	Outcome
<p>CIP activities that will lead to tangible, measurable, and time specific improved outcomes for children and families in the child welfare system</p>	<p>(1) maintain an established statewide multidisciplinary Task Force;</p> <p>(2) hold regular meetings between the courts and child welfare agencies;</p> <p>(3) promote active participation by judges, CIP Director, and TDFPS in the Child and Family Services Reviews;</p> <p>(4) ensure the visible and joint involvement of a Supreme Court Representative and the Director of Child Protective Services; and</p> <p>(5) institutionalize collaboration, so that it truly becomes the "best practices" standard for the way child welfare is approached in our state.</p> <p>(6) jointly plan and implement judicial and cross-training initiatives such as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Beyond the Bench > Associate Judges Training > CPS Judges Training > Child Prot Court Annual Update > Attorney ad Litem Training > TDFPS Staff Training per Title IV-B and IV-E 	<p>Court Improvement Program Staff, the Supreme Court, the Task Force on Foster Care, DFPS, Office of Court Administration, Other Stakeholders.</p>	<p>FY07 (2007-2008) FY08 (2008-2009) FY09 (2009-2010) FY10 (2010-2011)</p>	<p>Task Force on Foster Care will meet regularly,</p> <p>Task Force will involve active participation by judges, CIP Director, DFPS, CFSR Staff, and Office of Court Administration.</p>	<p>All stakeholders will possess institutional and infrastructural knowledge that will contribute to improved outcomes for children. Children and families involved in the foster care system will experience greater stability and permanence while in care, which will result in great well being during their stay and upon exiting foster care.</p> <p>TDFPS can use outputs and outcomes to establish the impact of the trainings offered. Outputs could include: number of caseworkers trained, pre and post training tests. Outcomes would include measurements assessing knowledge increase as determined by pre and post tests, and subsequent surveys indicating usage of information presented at training.</p> <p>Another method CIP will be examining is the use of AFCARS data within the Fostering Court Improvement Program, which tracks child outcomes from the time of removal to discharge to assess behavioral changes within the judicial system.</p> <p>The Texas 2008 CFSR Final Report and subsequent anticipated PIP, as well as statewide data on children in substitute care, will be the source for identifying needs for strengthening outcomes. Data contributing to CFSR composites will be available quarterly to form the basis for measuring improvement in outcomes. Data will be available to the county level.</p>

Strategy	Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Interim Benchmark	Outcome
<p>State court will collaborate meaningfully with the State child welfare agency and other stakeholders to achieve tangible, measurable, and time specific outcomes, and Stakeholders will continue to be involved in ongoing program implementation and evaluation.</p>	<p>Collaboration between the judiciary and the child welfare agency in the CFSR, the Statewide Assessment, CFSR On-site Review, Development and Implementation of the PIP, and Title IV-E Reviews.</p>	<p>Supreme Court, DFPS</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Quarterly Task Force Meetings to review policy and procedures, share data and case analysis information, explore opportunities to engage in joint training;</p> <p>Weekly "Collaboration Meetings" with Court CIP Executive Staff, DFPS, Office of Court Administration, and the Texas Center;</p> <p>Joint Court/DFPS participation in initiatives such as Texas Partnership for Family Recovery</p> <p>Joint Court/DFPS attendance at various meetings in Austin and all over the country dealing with CIP and CFSR outcomes.</p>	<p>All parts of the Texas child welfare system will be strengthened by the ongoing collaboration and by the training grant initiatives detailed in the strategic plan. The ongoing and meaningful collaboration that the Court and DFPS have engaged in during FYs 2006 and 2007 will continue and will result in better decisions for children and families involved in the child welfare system. Educated and informed decisions by all parties involved at the state and local levels will bring about improved outcomes, which will improve the State's overall performance on the CFSR, and Title IV-E Reviews.</p> <p>The Texas 2008 CFSR Final Report and subsequent anticipated PIP, as well as statewide data on children in substitute care, will be the source for identifying needs for strengthening outcomes. Data contributing to CFSR composites will be available quarterly to form the basis for measuring improvement in outcomes. Data will be available to the county level.</p>