



SUPREME COURT OF TEXAS PERMANENT JUDICIAL
COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

**Supreme Court of Texas
Permanent Judicial Commission for
Children, Youth and Families**

**February 12, 2010
Meeting Notebook**

**201 W. 14th Street
Austin, Texas 78701**

**Supreme Court of Texas
Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families
201 West 14th Street
Supreme Court Courtroom
Austin, Texas**

**February 12, 2010
Meeting Agenda**

- 10:00 **Commencement / Opening Remarks – The Honorable Harriet O’Neill**
1. Commissioner Reports
 2. Collaborative Council Member Changes, **Tab 2**
 3. Collaborative Council Report, **Tab 7**
 4. Committee Membership Changes - NONE
 5. Staff Member Changes
- 10:30 **First order of business – The Honorable Harriet O’Neill**
1. Adopt Minutes from November 13, 2009 Meeting, **Tab 1**
 2. Confirm addition of new collaborative council members
- 10:35 **Highlighted Issues / Commission Projects – The Honorable Harriet O’Neill**
1. Annual Report to Supreme Court & Admin Children & Families (PPT)
- 10:45 **Committee Reports**
1. Basic Committee, Robin Sage, Chair
 Commission Report, **Tab 3, Page 2**
 Meeting minutes, **Tab 5**
- Vote Required:**
CASA Grant Amendment, Tab 6 (pages 11-13 of amended statement)
2. Training, Camile DuBose, Chair
 Commission Report, **Tab 3, Page 7**
 Meeting minutes, **Tab 5**
 3. Technology, Karin Bonicoro, Chair
 Commission Report, **Tab 3, Page 9**
 Meeting minutes, **Tab 5**

- 11:15 **Executive Director's Report – Tina Amberboy**
- 1. Budget amendments, Tab 4**
2. Grant Administration Update
- 11:25 **DFPS Update**
- Dr. Jim Rogers
- DFPS Commissioner, Anne Heiligenstein
- CPS Assistant Commissioner, Audrey Deckinga
- 12:15 **Office of Court Administration Update – Carl Reynolds**
- 12:20 **Jurist in Residence Update – Judge John Specia**
 JIR letters (STAR Health, Mediation, Permanency Care Assistance)
 Valley (Special Project)
 PMC Issues (Round Table)
- 12:30 **Appleseed Project Update – Rebecca Lightsey/Marci Greer**
- 12:35 **Advocacy, Inc Project Update – Richard Lavallo**
- 12:40 **Legal Representation Study – Tina Amberboy**
- 12:45 **Public-Private Partnership – Judge Peter Sakai**
- 12:50 **Comments / New Business / Collaborative Council Issues**
- Dates for 2010 Meetings: 4/30/10, 8/20/10, 11/12/10**
- 1:00 **Adjourn**

Other materials to bring to the meeting:

JIRs
Attorney Manuals
NACC Conference Brochures
Commission DVDs
Annual Reports to SCT & ACF

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**PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION
FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES**

MINUTES OF MEETING

November 13, 2009
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Supreme Court Courtroom
Austin, Texas

COMMENCEMENT

Justice Harriet O'Neill called the meeting of the Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families to order on November 13, 2009, at 10:10 a.m. She welcomed everyone to the meeting.

ATTENDANCE

Members present:

Chair, Hon. Harriet O'Neill, Justice, The Supreme Court of Texas, Austin
Vice-Chair, Hon. Darlene Byrne, Judge, 126th District Court, Austin
Judge Karin Bonicoro, Associate Judge, Child Protection Court of Central Texas, San Marcos
Audrey Deckinga, CPS Assistant Commissioner, TX Department of Family & Protective Services, Austin
Hon. Camile Glasscock DuBose, Judge, 38th District Court, Uvalde
Bruce Esterline, Vice President for Grants, The Meadows Foundation, Dallas
Joe Gagen, Chief Executive Officer, Texas CASA, Inc., Austin
Stewart W. Gagnon, Partner, Fulbright & Jaworski, Houston
Joyce M. James, Deputy Commissioner, Texas Department of Family & Protective Services
Carolyne Rodriguez, Director of Texas Strategic Consulting, Casey Family Programs, Austin
Hon. Dean Rucker, Presiding Judge, 7th Region, 318th District Court, Midland
Fairy Davenport Rutland, Director, Appeals Div., Texas Health & Human Services Commission, Austin
Hon. Robin Sage, 307th Family District Court, Longview
Hon. Cheryl Lee Shannon, Judge, 305th District Court, Dallas
G. Allan Van Fleet, Shareholder, Greenburg Traurig, LLP, Houston

Members not present:

Harper Estes, Shareholder, Lynch, Chappell, & Alsup, Midland
Hon. Bonnie Hellums, Judge, 247th District Court, Houston
Hon. Patricia A. Macias, Judge, 388th District Court, El Paso
Hon. Yvonne Gonzalez Toureilles, Representative, Texas House of Representatives, Alice
Hon. Jeff Wentworth, Senator, Texas Senate, San Antonio

Staff in attendance:

Tina Amberboy, Executive Director, Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families
Sylvia Griego, Executive Assistant, Supreme Court of Texas
Tim Kennedy, TexDECK Project Manager, Office of Court Administration
Teri Moran, Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families
Amy Fitzgerald, Project Manager, Legal Representation Study
Jessica Lynch, Research Assistant, Legal Representation Study
Carl Reynolds, Administrative Director, Office of Court Administration
Tiffany Roper, Assistant Director, Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families

Hon. John Specia, Senior District Judge (Ret.), Judge in Residence, Office of Court Administration
Bryan Wilson, Grant Administrator, Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families

Collaborative Council members in attendance:

Conni Barker, Director/Government Affairs, DePelchin Children's Center, Houston
Irene Clements, Vice President for Advocacy, Children and Family Services, Lutheran Social Services
William B. Connolly, Attorney, William B. Connolly & Associates, Houston
Susan Hopkins Craven, Executive Director, Texas Alliance for Infant Mental Health, Austin
Debra D. Emerson, CPS Director of Policy and Program, TX Dept. of Family & Protective Svcs, Austin
Mike Foster, Neighbor to Family, Austin.
Leslie Hill, Managing Attorney, Office of Child Representation, Travis County
Richard Lavallo, Senior Attorney, Advocacy, Inc., Austin
Stephanie Smith Ledesma, Managing Attorney, Office of Parental Representation, Travis County
Tracy Levins, Director, Admin. Svcs. and Community Relations, Texas Youth Commission, Austin
Rebecca Lightsey, Executive Director, Texas Appleseed, Austin
Judy Powell, Communications Director, Parent Guidance Center, Austin
Gina Van Osselaer, Executive Director, Austin Children's Shelter, Austin

Collaborative Council members not present:

Emy Lou Baldridge, Co-Founder, Greater Texas Community Partners, Dallas
Roy Block, Executive Director, Texas Foster Family Association, San Antonio
Susan Boone, Executive Director, Texas Council of Child Welfare Boards
Penny Cook, Co-Founder, The Faith Connection, Dallas
Cathy Crabtree, Executive Director, Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas, Austin
De Shaun Ealoms, Parent Program Specialist, TX Dept. of Family & Protective Svcs, Austin
Barbara Elias-Perciful, President, Texas Loves Children, Dallas
Tomas Esparza, Jr., Attorney at Law, The Law Office of Tomas Esparza, Jr., Austin
Benigno F. Fernandez, M.D., President, Texas Society of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, San Antonio
Eileen Garcia-Matthews, Executive Director of Texans Care for Children
David Halpern, Director, Promise Mentor Program, Seedling Foundation, Austin
Alicia Key, Deputy Attorney General for Child Support, Office of the Attorney General, Austin
Hon. F. Scott McCown, Executive Director, Center for Public Policy Priorities, Austin
Chadwick Sapenter, entrepreneur and former foster youth, Austin
Vicki Spriggs, Executive Director, Texas Juvenile Probation Commission, Austin
Gene Terry, Operations Director, Texas Association of Counties, Austin
Gloria Terry, Coalition President, Texas Council on Family Violence, Austin
Arabia Vargas, Chair, Bexar County Child Welfare Board, San Antonio
Henrietta Wright, Vice President, Board of Directors, Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas, Dallas

Guests and others present:

Christopher Felleisen, Policy Analyst for Jurisprudence Committee, representing Senator Wentworth
Jason Hassay, General Counsel, Office of Senator Carlos I. Uresti
Jim Terrell, Jim Terrell, Director, House Agriculture & Livestock Committee, representing
Representative Yvonne Gonzalez Toureilles
Katie Ogden, Director & General Counsel, Senate Committee on Jurisprudence, representing Senator
Wentworth

OPENING REMARKS, Justice Harriet O'Neill

Justice O'Neill called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone, and immediately began the meeting.

Commission Membership Changes

Justice O'Neill welcomed the three new Commission members. Judge Robin Sage presides over the 307th District Court in Gregg County, and is the Chair of our Basic Committee and a member of the Bench Book workgroup.

Judge Karin Bonicoro presides over the Child Protection Court of Central Texas, and is the chair of our Technology Committee.

Joe Gagen is the Chief Executive Officer of Texas CASA, and is an active voice in many of our projects.

Justice O'Neill noted the second anniversary of the Commission's creation, and reported that the three members whose terms expire this year have signed up for another term. She thanked Judge Darlene Byrne, Carolyne Rodriguez, and Bruce Esterline for continuing their commitment to this important work.

New Collaborative Council Members

Justice O'Neill listed the new Collaborative Council members and then asked them each to introduce themselves.

Leslie Hill, Managing Attorney, Office of Child Representation (OCR), Travis County, said she was thrilled to be part of the work of the Commission. The OCR is partially funded by CIP grants and has been in operation about six months. Ms. Hill's background includes prosecuting CPS cases.

Stephanie Smith Ledesma, Managing Attorney, Office of Parental Representation (OPR), Travis County, reported that her OPR office has been operational since about May. Ms. Ledesma's background includes representing families involved in CPS cases. She added that her office's philosophy is that the outcomes of children are improved and happen sooner when the parents' needs are being met.

Irene Clements, Vice President for Advocacy, Children and Family Services, Lutheran Social Services, and President of Texas Foster Family Association, was a foster parent for 27 years and adopted four children, three from CPS. She said she was thrilled to be a part of the group.

Chadwick Sapenter, entrepreneur and former foster youth, and Kenneth Thompson, Fatherhood Program Specialist, DFPS, are two new members who could not attend the meeting.

Two potential members were submitted for consideration, but had not been reviewed by the Executive Committee. Justice O'Neill advised that anyone who wished to speak Tina Amberboy about the addition of either of the proposed members was encouraged to do so in the week following the commission meeting. If she receives no comments, the proposed members will be added to the Collaborative Council.

The proposed members were Janet Sharkis, Executive Director of the Texas Office of Developmental Disabilities, and Robert Hartman, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of DePelchin Children's Center in Houston.

Other changes pending: Conni Barker, with DePelchin, is retiring in 2010, but until then, Ms. Barker has agreed to continue to serve. Justice O'Neill thanked Ms. Barker for her service. Also, Robin Harrison with Community Connection Network in Houston is interested in serving, but was not at the meeting.

Committee Membership Changes

Judge DuBose added four new members to the Training Committee: Shaneka Odom, a foster youth specialist with DFPS, Alice Emerson, Assistant County Attorney in Williamson County, Cathy Cockerham, Program Operations Director with Texas CASA, and Tracy Harting, an attorney with the Travis County Office of Parental Representation.

Additionally, Judge Hal Gaither and Chadwick Sapenter recently completed their terms on the Training Committee.

Judge Chavez has completed his term on the Technology Committee.

Thanks to Judges Chavez and Gaither, and to Mr. Sapenter for giving us their time and expertise.

Justice O'Neill thanked Collaborative Council members for their attendance and contributions. She referred commission members to the Collaborative Council report in the meeting notebook.

Staff Member Changes

Justice O'Neill reported that Jacque Barclay left the staff of the Commission in September. Her expertise and teamwork will be missed. Rashonda Thomas has been hired to provide accounting and finance support, and she will work on budgets, payment of travel expenses, and supporting commission staff with purchasing needs, etc. Justice O'Neill said she was sad to report that Bryan Wilson will be leaving next week, to return to the Task Force on Indigent Defense. Justice O'Neill lauded Mr. Wilson's commitment and hard work that has included setting up the Commission's grant management process. She thanked him and wished him well.

Justice O'Neill reported that although she will not run for re-election when her term ends at the end of 2010, she plans to stay involved in the Commission's work. Per the Supreme Court order creating it, the chair of the Commission must be a sitting Supreme Court judge, so a replacement will be recruited and appointed, but precisely when that will happen hasn't been determined.

INTRODUCTIONS

Justice O'Neill asked commission members to introduce themselves and share news from their jurisdictions.

Christopher Felleisen, Policy Analyst for Jurisprudence Committee, representing Senator Wentworth introduced himself and said he will be working with Katie Ogden, Director & General Counsel of the Senate Committee on Jurisprudence, during the legislative interim.

Stewart Gagnon, a partner of Fulbright & Jaworski, said he has been working the last few months putting together a statewide project on assisting self-represented litigants, which correlates to issues that the Commission is examining. Mr. Gagnon stated this challenge, which he has dealt with since 1998, is coming to a forefront in Texas this year. Justice O'Neill noted that she recently attended a dinner event sponsored by Texas Appleseed, Inc., where Fulbright & Jaworski was honored for its significant pro bono contributions. Justice O'Neill thanked Mr. Gagnon for being responsible for much of that effort and for his former service as chair of the Access to Justice Commission. Mr. Gagnon commended Appleseed's long-term care and stated that he and his firm were glad to be a part of that effort.

Audrey Deckinga, Child Protective Services (CPS) Assistant Commissioner, TX Department of Family & Protective Services, introduced herself, saying she was scheduled to give the Commission an update later in the meeting.

The Hon. Camile Glasscock DuBose, Judge, 38th District Court, Uvalde, said her jurisdiction just finished cohosting an ad litem training that they've been doing for several years and that it went well.

The Hon. Cheryl Lee Shannon, Judge, 305th District Court, Dallas, said she is excited about implementing her court's video conferencing project that just received a CIP grant award from the Commission. She reported that last week, Dallas hosted one of the Commission-sponsored NACC ad litem training conferences, which went well. She also noted that Justice O'Neill was honored last month in Dallas at CASA's Justice is Served dinner.

The Hon. Robin Sage, 307th Family District Court, Longview, and Chair of the Basic Projects Committee, introduced herself and said her jurisdiction also just completed its ad litem training conference. At last week's National Adoption day celebration, six children were adopted, and Justice O'Neill came and presided over the adoptions.

The Hon. Dean Rucker, 318th Family District Court, Presiding Judge, 7th Region, Midland, reported that a new district judge in his region has taken over Judge Rucker's criminal docket so Judge Rucker can go back to his first love of hearing all family law. Judge Rucker congratulated Justice O'Neill for the great job she did as the keynote speaker at his jurisdiction's CASA volunteer recognition dinner.

The Hon. Darlene Byrne, 126th District Court in Travis County, invited members to her court's CLE-approved brown bag lunch training next week (which her court conducts regularly) on appellate court issues. Her court is creating a bench card for judges regarding required announcements at the conclusion of a parental rights termination case. She's excited about adoption day coming up next week in her court when some 40 youth will be adopted. Judge Byrne's NCJFCJ-designated model court is progressing in its goals, and she noted the Family Finding Initiative headed in her court by Travis County CASA Director, Laura Wolfe. Her court is also participating in Explore UT, an event where foster youth, especially middle school children, get a chance to explore the UT campus. The project's goal is to start laying the groundwork in their minds that college is a viable option. Her court is continuing its database project and its efforts to address disproportionality. Judge Byrne is part of the state task force on disproportionality. Her court is also laying out a new pilot project on early appointment of attorneys in all CPS cases, regardless of indigence. The pilot project will attempt to locate parents after the ex parte hearing to determine whether they legally qualify for court-appointed attorney due to indigence. If a parent appears to meet the criteria, an attorney will be appointed to represent the parent before the case has its first adversarial hearing. She'll report back on the project's cost and effectiveness, noting that many of her Texas Family Code Chapter 262 cases are reverting to Chapter 264 cases before the very first hearing. Judge Byrne noted that more family members are located by getting lawyers into the field. She noted that Ms. Ledesma and Ms. Hill both participate in the project.

Tina Amberboy, Executive Director of the Children's Commission, will report to the Commission later on the agenda.

Judge John Specia, Office of Court Administration (OCA) Judge in Residence, San Antonio, will also report to the Commission later in the agenda.

Jason Hassay, General Counsel, Office of Senator Carlos I. Uresti, said one of his office's big activities is working on SB 28, which created a Blue Ribbon Task Force composed of nine individuals appointed from the Governor's Office, the Lt. Governor's Office, and the Office of the Speaker of the House. They will be tasked to evaluate and assess child abuse and prevention resources around the state to determine what is working or not working and to develop an improvement game plan. Recently, a celebration was held to mark the fifth anniversary of a similar panel Senator Uresti created five years ago at the local level in

Bexar County. As soon as all the task force members are appointed, they will get to work. He thanked the many people connected to the Commission who have helped him get this effort going. Judge Specia thanked Mr. Hassay and Senator Uresti for having actively participated in the October Summit.

Jim Terrell, Director, House Agriculture & Livestock Committee, representing Representative Yvonne Gonzalez Toureilles, introduced himself.

Joyce M. James, Deputy Commissioner, Texas Department of Family & Protective Services, shared about the first official meeting held yesterday of the Public Private Partnership, a project that follows a couple of year's discussion on the importance of strengthening the relationship between DFPS and its providers. The first planning meeting was held in 2008, the day after Commissioner Anne Heiligenstein began work. The meeting was a demonstration, Ms. James said, of the progress made and the trust that has developed between DFPS and the provider community, which has built a solid foundation for the hard work ahead – to create the best child welfare system possible. Two judges sit on that committee, Judge Peter Sakai from Bexar County and Judge Mazur from Dallas County and another judge will be appointed. Ms. James noted that the project is intentionally "light" on DFPS representation, and that the group has made a commitment to leave personal agendas outside of the meetings and to come together with the common vision of putting the child in the center when making recommendations that will ultimately go to Commissioner Heiligenstein. Ms. James said she is hopeful about the group's work and she looks forward to what it can accomplish. She will not only keep the Commission updated, but believes Commission feedback may inform the group's work. The partnership is committed to being a conduit for information to flow up and back out to a broader audience as everyone works together to improve the child welfare system.

Carolyn Rodriguez, Director of Texas Strategic Consulting, Casey Family Programs, Austin, spoke about how Casey agreed to supplement the Appleseed study on long-term foster care on a national level by asking its Knowledge Management Team at Casey headquarters to assess national practices regarding youth in long-term care. The Casey team sent a report yesterday called Promising Court Practices: Strategies to Achieve Timely Permanency. Ms. Rodriguez said she's interested to see where the two studies have similar results and recommendations for best practices. Ms. Rodriguez said she's excited about Casey's plan to contribute to the judicial training on disproportionality this May. She has high hopes for the disproportionality task force, which has gotten judges on board and has partnered with Texas universities. Texas CASA and the Department of State Health Services plans to have many of their executives go through disproportionality training. Casey is also working with Family Based Safety Services projects, looking for ways to strengthen the process. It's a new partnership between Casey and the National Resource Center for Child Protection. Ms. Rodriguez reiterated her pleasure in being a part of the Public Private Partnership initiative as a non-voting member which allows for somewhat objective perspective.

Fairy Davenport Rutland, Director, Appeals Div., Texas Health & Human Services Commission, Austin, spoke about the benefit of learning about other projects as a part of this Commission. The State Bar's Child Abuse and Neglect Committee just began its 25th year. Judge Special and Ms. Rutland were original members when the committee was founded. Last month's Bar Journal had two articles about child abuse and neglect, one about the Commission's work, and another article was about how Barbara Elias-Perciful, current chair of the Child Abuse and Neglect Commission, has partnered Texas Lawyers for Children with the State Bar's Texas Young Lawyer's Association (TYLA) to work on furthering pro bono coverage of CPS cases in Texas. Ms. Rutland is happy to report that her committee will sponsor a full day of training in CPS cases during the State Bar's annual Advanced Family Law Conference. In years past, CPS training at the conference was allotted a half-day. Now, it encompasses a whole day, which attests to

the growing awareness in the state about the importance of these cases. Last year's training was very successful and this year Judge Rucker is the course director for this year's training.

Judge Karin Bonicoro, Associate Judge with the Child Protection Court of Central Texas serving seven rural courts, reported that her jurisdiction is about to have its first adoption day, a multi-county event where about nine children will be adopted. She thanked CASA for its strong support. She reported on a collaborative workgroup in her jurisdiction formed to work together to improve the system. One of their focuses has been a mentoring program for youth who will probably age out of care. In the past few years, they have identified many resources available to these youth, such as PAL services and services provided by Texas State University, which has a transition program for these youth similar to the one located at Austin Community College. What has always been lacking with these programs is a pool of mentors, but thankfully CASA has hired a person to take the helm of the project. A subcommittee of the group will develop an individual plan for each child to help them transition out of care. An advisory panel that includes former foster youth will help guide the group. Judge Bonicoro will report back on the project. She added that she was inspired at the Summit in October to institute a new practice where she now holds the first permanency hearing at 90 days instead of 120, and she will hold placement review hearings every 90 days as well, which doubles her hearings. But the more frequent schedule helps Judge Bonicoro monitor cases to know whether services are being provided, and in general speeds up cases.

Joe Gagen, Chief Executive Officer, Texas CASA, Inc., Austin, expressed his thanks for the opportunity to be a part of the Commission. He summarized CASA's two main goals of representing the best interests of a child, and of working toward having a CASA for every child in the system. Now, there are enough CASA volunteers to represent about half of the Texas children in the care of DFPS. In urban areas, CASA represents less than one out of five children. In the last session, the Texas Legislature allotted additional funds to CASA. Mr. Gagen said CASA's goal this year is to provide services for 4,000 more children. He summarized the many collaborative projects with which CASA is involved. He highlighted the expansion of CASA's WINGS program that targets youth who are close to aging out of care to provide them with intensive life-skills preparation.

Bruce Esterline, Vice President for Grants, Meadows Foundation, Dallas said his organization has supported with grants many of the projects mentioned today, adding that his participation in this Commission has helped Meadows get a better idea of the child-welfare system's needs. Meadows has been a longtime CASA and CAC supporter, Mr. Esterline said, adding that, "I don't know that we've ever met a CASA or CAC that we haven't funded." He said he's proud that the Meadows Foundation has in the past been the largest single contributor to Texas CASA. A part of a pool of nonprofits, Meadows also manages about 37 buildings in Dallas and provides free space to a number of organizations. One is the Transition Resource Action Center (TRAC) program for kids aging out of the system in the North Texas area, and it may be one of the largest, or perhaps is the largest program of its kind in the state. Meadows is deeply embedded in much of the Commission's work, Mr. Esterline said.

ADOPT MINUTES

The meeting minutes from the August 21, 2009, Children's Commission meeting were approved by general consent with no corrections.

HIGHLIGHTED ISSUES/COMMISSION PROJECTS, Justice Harriet O'Neill

Summit III –Justice O'Neill reported that the Commission was the proud host of the third National Judicial Leadership Summit on the Protection of Children October 15-17, 2009. That it was a great success, she added, is a tribute to our staff and the Commission. The Summit audience was made up of the Chief Justice, the Child Welfare Director, the Education Commissioner, the State Court Administrator, and the CIP Director of each state. Justice O'Neill added that she got a lot of good

feedback from participants, many saying they were impressed by our Commission and its unique structure.

A report and the action plan developed during the summit are located under TAB 6 of the meeting notebook. Carl Reynolds will report on the success of the summit later in the meeting. Mr. Reynolds provided critical leadership in seeing to it that the summit was the success it turned out to be.

COMMISSION VIDEO

At the last meeting we unveiled our logo, Justice O'Neill said, and today we are going to show you the Children's Commission video unveiled at the Summit dinner. We created the video to describe the Commission, its activities, and reason for existence.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Most of our ongoing projects will be reported on by the committee chairs, Ms. Amberboy said, adding that she would report on the status of grant funds. On Tuesday, the Commission received the statement of award from ACF. Revised budgets that reflect the amount actually received is located under TAB 4 of the committee notebook. The Basic Grant suffered a shortfall, which will likely be corrected once the discretionary portion of the grant is received in March 2010. In the past, this portion has amounted to about \$200,000.

A list of funded projects is located under TAB 8 of the meeting notebook. Ms Amberboy stated she will seek approval to amend the budget at the next commission meeting.

Ms. Amberboy stated she is getting ready to undertake an audit of the commission's fiscal and program operations. In addition to personnel changes, she has restructured the way the Supreme Court's accounting department will be handling CIP expenditures.

Commission staff is working on 2009 Annual Reports, one to be submitted to ACF by the end of the year, and another less technical report for the Commission and the Supreme Court, which will be presented at the first 2010 commission meeting.

Ms. Amberboy would like to discuss the possibility of re-establishing the Strategic Planning Committee to check compare current projects to strategies and make any mid-term corrections that are warranted. Additionally, she would like the Strategic Planning Committee to look at whether the Commission is keeping up with national trends regarding blended systems of juvenile justice and child protection.

Summit III –At the Summit, the Texas team came up with an action plan of five goals:

Goal 1: (Safely Reduce PMC population)

Ms. Amberboy directed members to Tab 6 in the meeting notebook for details. A Commission workgroup was formed last year to address this issue. It will probably be reconstituted and more members added to it to address this difficult goal.

Goals 2 & 3 (Education)

The Texas team's goals are: a) form an ad hoc Education Committee under the Commission, b) improve education outcomes by keeping kids closer to home, a difficult goal to accomplish.

Ms. Amberboy is in the early stages of forming the Education Committee and asked members to please forward suggestions for Education Committee members (including Texas Education Agency or other school officials) to her. By the first or second Commission meeting in 2010 we hope to have a committee

structure ready for commission approval. Ms. Rodriguez recommended adding an Education Specialist to the committee.

Goals 4 & 5 (Disproportionality)

Ms. Amberboy reported about two goals related to disproportionality that are already in the works. One is to develop a judicial training conference specifically on disproportionality, which the Texas Center for the Judiciary (TCJ) has scheduled and is putting together for May 2010. The second is to provide training on implicit bias at the conference for new judges, which is another activity that TCJ has already started working on. An update on these two goals will be provided at the next Commission meeting.

Other Business

At the last meeting, the commission gave the staff permission to make national adoption day grant awards. Under Tab 3 is a summary of the awards made.

Action: Justice O'Neill asked for a motion to ratify the expenditures made for adoption day. Judge Byrne made the motion, Mr. Gagnon seconded, and the members approved unanimously.

Ms. Rodriguez asked if there will be a report published from the Summit. Mr. Reynolds replied that official journal-like reports have not been a part of the Summits, but that he is going to work with NCSC to report on outcomes and he predicts it will become a more routine part of the Summit process. Ms. Amberboy said a pre-Summit report on state's activities would be helpful to Summit participants, as would producing a report during the Summit. Mr. Reynolds suggested that would be a worthy project to look for grants to fund.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Basic Projects Committee

Judge Robin Sage said the committee has been busy with many projects and she would report on those projects that are not scheduled to be reported on later in the meeting. She referred members to the full report under Tab 5 in the meeting notebook. The Bench Book project is on schedule. It is intended to be a state of the art, online tool that is scheduled to be unveiled at the CPS Judges Conference in August 2010.

The TYC/CPS project resulted in a legal representation project Richard Lavallo will discuss later in the meeting. Four Round Table discussions are tentatively planned for 2010: – 1) the use of data by judges, 2) giving proper notice to parties, 3) a round table for prosecutors to discuss their needs, including more training, and 4) the dual role of attorney ad litem and guardian ad litem. The legal representation study has begun, and Amy Fitzgerald and Jessica Lynch will report on it later in the meeting. We continue to work with the department on the CFSR Program Improvement Plan (PIP) and some of the 2010 Round Tables will help fulfill PIP goals.

Training Committee

Judge Camile DuBose reported that the National Association of Counsel for Children (NACC) trainings received good evaluations from participants, and some 500 attorneys have attended. Red Book trainings, which are a more advanced course to help attorneys prepare for the child welfare certification exam, have also started. The committee supports conducting prosecutor training, and the prosecutors' round table that is on the schedule for next year will help in that planning process. The Training Committee hopes to provide scholarships to send some Texas attorneys to more specific trial advocacy training and have looked into training offered by NACC and the National Institute for Trial Advocacy (NITA). Roughly \$30,000 of training grant funds were spent for scholarships to send attorneys to the American Bar Association (ABA) parent representation training conference. Also, training grant funds may be used to send attorneys to the State Bar's child abuse and neglect training at the annual Family Law conference

next year. In October 2010, Austin will host the NACC child welfare law conference. Flyers are available with details. The disproportionality training mentioned earlier is in its planning stages. Judge DuBose is on TCJ's curriculum committee and will help plan it. Also, for the first time, new associate judges will be invited to TCJ's annual College for New Judges training. Judge Specia commented on how long overdue and important it is to provide this training to associate judges. Judge DuBose was an associate judge for 15 years before attending the College for New Judges when she was elected as a district judge; she said she could have greatly benefited from that training as an associate judge. Judge DuBose is heading the committee that is planning next year's CPS Judges conference and asked anyone who had suggestions to send them to her.

Technology Committee

Judge Karin Bonicoro reported on four different topics. The committee is in the planning stages for the Round Table on the use of CPS data for child protection courts and is addressing questions concerning the appropriate uses for the data and sorting out ethical implications for courts. The round table had been planned for late this year, but was postponed because of the Summit and will now be conducted early in 2010.

The child protection case management system (CPCMS) rolled out this September to the 17 specialty courts, and it was timed so judges could use it a couple of weeks before the CPC judges training to allow time for feedback about the system. In fact, OCA's IT staff came away from the training with a long list of requested enhancements, modifications, add-ons, and problems. Many adjustments were made and Judge Bonicoro said the revisions, done in a short period of time, have created a much more robust system than was originally rolled out. The system links to other court files that can be accessed online, making it possible to access information without having to physically carry as many files. The downside to the system is that the data available to a judge on the bench is only as good as what has been input into the system, and entering that data can be a very labor intensive process in the transition. OCA will make this system available to any court who wants to use it. Judge Bonicoro said that if the system were to be adopted state wide, it would allow courts to measure the same data, apples to apples and oranges to oranges, which would be a tremendous tool.

The functional requirements – a blueprint that captures the steps in a CPS case, including just about every conceivable path a case can take – was completed before CPCMS was created. The functional requirements will be updated with new components that will include performance measures that ACF collects and scores as part of its CFSR. Judge Bonicoro added that the CPCMS system has a feature that not only allows judges to call up all the medications a child has been prescribed, but the system will flag instances where too much medication is being prescribed. This feature will be added to the functional requirements.

The commission approved a grant for Tarrant County to develop a case management system that could be used by CPS and juvenile courts. Tarrant County partnered with Bexar and Dallas counties to share the cost of matching funds and share the system developed with CIP grant funds. The counties are working on revising the project.

DFPS UPDATE

Audrey Deckinga reported on the progress of the Foster Care Redesign project, which is intended to address the problem of too many children being placed far from their homes due to lack of placements. The Public Private Partnership will research and implement strategies to revamp the whole contracting system from top to bottom to address this problem. CPS will procure two contracts as part of the redesign, one for a simulation model for information including where kids enter the system, what services they need and where they need them. The second one is for a consultant to help DFPS meet the needs identified by

the simulation modeling. The goal is to design a model where the kids taken into care stay close to home, with siblings, and in the least restrictive setting, in an effort to improve outcomes.

Family based safety services (FBSS)– During the last legislative session, more funds were appropriated to hire additional staff for FBSS, much like the 2005 legislature did for hiring more investigative staff. In 2007, the legislature increased resources for conservatorship staff and gave DFPS a target for reducing the number of children in foster care. This goal was accomplished by focusing on the front end of the system by concentrating on providing services to the family to prevent the need for removal. While this reduced the number of children coming into the system, it was surmised that eventually FBS services would likely reach a limit for the number of families for which its use would be appropriate, and that the number of children brought into the system would begin to rise again. DFPS accurately projected a rise in this number of children. In September, DFPS implemented a new system that made it less arduous for teachers to report possible instances of child abuse and neglect, resulting in an all time record high number of intakes and investigations in September and an increase in removals. The saturation of family based safety services contributed to this increase, as well as the effect of the nation's economic difficulties. While food stamp applications increase drastically during economic difficulties, it takes about nine months to a year before the economy's impact expresses itself in increased CPS intakes, investigations and removals. Additionally, a few children in Texas with prior CPS history have tragically died, which historically brings an upswing in the number of reports received as well as an increase in the number of cases caseworkers bring to judges because they do not want any of their cases to result in another tragic death.

DFPS had begun a regional review in the Dallas area in anticipation of this upswing even before the child deaths. After the deaths occurred, DFPS escalated its reviews, completing assessments of investigations in Harris County, Lubbock County, El Paso County, and Bexar County. DFPS also commissioned a study by the Health and Human Services Commission to look at longitudinal data of risk factors to better understand and prevent reoccurrence. This study will take a few months.

DFPS is working with the National Resource Center for Child Protection to undertake a study on risk and safety within CPS across all stages of service, to make sure definitions of each are clear and consistent throughout each stage so staff knows when to bring which cases before a judge, for example. DFPS is also working with the National Resource Center to assess all training to ensure it incorporates all DFPS has learned about risk and safety into curriculum. Ms. Amberboy noted that certain DFPS input will be incorporated into the Bench Book and the CPS judges training.

Judge Byrne noted that as a result of the department's reviews of child deaths, her affidavits and court reports now have a new section on child fatality risk factors where the facts of the case are listed under each child death risk factor. Judge Byrne commended the department for this new information which she says is extremely informative and helpful to her.

Judge Specia asked Ms. Deckinga if the department is briefing judges on their reviews of FBSS. She said that hasn't been done yet and they agreed it would be helpful. Ms. Amberboy suggested adding this information to the bench book. Ms. Deckinga agreed to provide the information to Commission staff.

Ms. Deckinga said that as a result of the high workload of FBSS staff and the child deaths, the legislature in the last session gave DFPS funds to hire an additional 116 FBSS staff. The plan was to hire them throughout the year, but instead they are being hired right away. Another staff objective was to hire more caseworkers and to focus efforts on the front end with FBSS and the back end, with work targeted toward getting kids adopted.

Two public hearings are coming up. One, on the state options that legislature approved under the federal Fostering Connections Act, scheduled on November 16. The big optional requirement under the new law is having relatives take PMC from the department after the relatives have had foster care licenses for six months. The court can order PMC to the relatives so they can receive subsidies. This holds great potential for getting kids out of PMC.

The other public hearing on November 23 is on Supervised Independent Living for kids aging out of the system, to help them have a place to live.

OFFICE OF COURT ADMINISTRATION UPDATE

Mr. Reynolds, Administrative Director, Office of Court Administration, said that because members had already been briefed during the meeting on many OCA projects, he would add his thoughts to the Summit and echo that it was a great success, a great opportunity for Texas, and that pulling it all together took a great team effort. NCSC staff stated they really enjoyed working with the Texas planning team. .

The Summit gave an opportunity to share what the Commission has accomplished, Mr. Reynolds said, and also contributed to Texas taking the forefront in these issues. From a Texas-centric standpoint, the Summit added to Texas' cache and standing, Mr. Reynolds said, and showcased our work and our leaders, particularly standouts such as Tina Amberboy's accomplishments as Executive Director.

Judge Byrne said National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) leaders who attended the Summit were very impressed with the Commission and gains made in Texas.

Mr. Reynolds reported on two new positions soon to be filled at OCA. One is an attorney to support the 17 CPC specialty courts; that position is funded by a grant from the federal Children's Justice Act, which is administered by the Texas Center for the Judiciary. Additionally, OCA received a grant from the governor's office to hire an attorney to be a single point of contact for any court in the state that wants to work on domestic violence issues. Mr. Reynolds noted how the two issues overlap in that CPS cases often involve domestic violence.

Justice O'Neill commended her staff on the countless hours they spent working on the Summit in addition to their other duties.

JURIST IN RESIDENCE REPORT, Judge John Specia

Judge John Specia passed out a copy of the first Jurist-in-Residence letter (about STAR Health) that will be emailed to CPS judges, and will cover timely issues in a Q&A format. Before giving his report, he wanted to add another perspective to the talk about the Summit's success. From a judicial standpoint, while his colleagues were impressed with the Commission and its collaborative work, the court improvement programs of many sister states are facing funding crises because of the nation's economic downturn.

Judge Specia is working with Commission and TCJ staff on a Beyond the Bench conference for Harris County. Because it's the most populous county in Texas, Harris County influences how Texas compares nationally to other states in data measures that the federal government uses to rate a state's overall performance in outcomes of safety, permanency, and well-being. About 25 percent of all the CPS cases in the state originate in Harris County, and about 25 percent of all the state's foster kids come from Harris County.

APPLESEED PROJECT UPDATE, Rebecca Lightsey

Ms. Lightsey reported that the research portion is nearly complete, with 15 jurisdictions covered and more than 100 interviews completed with every single type of stakeholder. Ms. Lightsey said that probably every single person in the room has been interviewed or someone in their organization has. She thanked Mr. Gagnon not only for Fulbright & Jaworski's significant pro bono work on the project that has totaled more than 500 hours in 2009, mainly in conducting interviews but also for the firm having contributed so much knowledge and insight into the project.

Appleaseed has analyzed thousands of data points, Ms. Lightsey said, and she thanked the department for providing the data. It is so rich, according to Ms. Lightsey, that the hardest part is knowing when to stop evaluating it because there are so many different ways to look at it.

The most challenging part of the project is now with figuring out what the policy recommendations should be. A significant finding is the similarities in issues across the state. The department is already working on many of the issues and some of the judges are as well, Ms. Lightsey said.

A way to encapsulate the essence of the project, Ms. Lightsey said, is to frame it with the answer to one of the questions asked of stakeholders, "Who is it that really knows the child the best?" The lack of response to this question is one of the key issues Appleaseed wants to address in its final report.

Appleaseed is close to schedule to have the report completed before the beginning of the next legislative session.

Justice O'Neill restated how important the project is, and agreed with Ms. Lightsey that now the real work begins, because although data has been collected, it must be understood to be useful.

ADVOCACY, INC. PROJECT UPDATE

Mr. Lavallo reported that the new project supported by the Commission will allow Advocacy, Inc. (Advocacy) attorneys to represent children with disabilities who are in foster care and also placed in the Texas Youth Commission or state schools (now called state-supported living centers). Advocacy received funding from the Meadows Foundation, the ReesJones Foundation, the Texas Access to Justice Commission, and the Children's Commission. Advocacy hired two attorneys who are ready to go to represent dually managed youth. Currently, there are 23 foster kids in state schools that are under the conservatorship of DFPS, eight kids who have aged out but are still eligible for independent living, and 77 kids who are involved with the Texas Youth Commission and CPS. Ms. Amberboy will send a letter introducing Advocacy's services to the judges. Advocacy plans to work with DFPS to identify specific cases and courts to try to get the project attorneys appointed as attorney ad litem for the youth the subject of existing cases and to receive appointments in future cases. These cases will involve all of the issues the Commission is following – placement, transition, education, medications and health care – the whole gamut of issues faced by all kids in the foster care system – not just youth who have disabilities.

Mr. Lavallo asked everyone to consider youth in their jurisdictions who could be referred for Advocacy's representation. He also recommended a system be developed where DFPS or judges could refer at risk youth to them – youth who have disabilities and who are at risk of becoming involved in the juvenile justice system.

Judge Specia asked Ms. Deckinga about the need to train caseworkers to refer such at-risk kids. Mr. Lavallo said that the project cannot encompass every foster kid who might encounter the juvenile justice system, but that it is focused on kids who commit serious enough offenses that they run the risk of going to TYC. The project's main goal is to ensure that the services available to foster kids follow those foster youth who go to TYC. Mr. Lavallo asked commission members to help him get the word out about this

free legal representation. Judge Sage said she would add it to her association of CPS judges' network. Members commented about the project's potential to become a model other states could replicate.

LEGAL REPRESENTATION STUDY

Amy Fitzgerald gave members a listing of LRS workgroup members and the complete set of documents being used as part of data collection. Ms. Fitzgerald she and Jessica are wrapping up the planning stage and moving to their interview and data collection stage. The online survey tool has been selected, the database prepared for collecting results, and the interview list created. Data collection will include in-person and telephone interviews, electronic surveys and combinations of the different methods. Between November and April 2010, data will be collected with a draft report due in June and the final report due in August. Letters have been sent to judges who hear CPS cases introducing the project. Ms. Fitzgerald welcomed suggestions and feedback from Commission members and thanked those who have already answered the survey. Ms. Amberboy congratulated Ms. Fitzgerald for her work.

COMMENTS/NEW BUSINESS

Justice O'Neill apologized for not having already set next year's meeting dates and proposed the following dates for 2010 meetings:

February 12, 2010

April 30, 2010 (or May 28)

August 20, 2010

November 12, 2010 (or November 19)

She asked members to contact staff as soon as possible with their availability.

Justice O'Neill asked if anyone had questions or wanted to make comments.

Conni Barker related a recent surprising discovery that of the 540 children in DePelchin's care, 221 have TPR, and only 21 are PMC without TPR. Most had parental rights terminated in 2007 and 2008. Although DePelchin receives quarterly reports from CPS on the legal status of children in their care, Ms. Barker said DePelchin had not specifically requested the TPR status of PMC children in their care. She added that as a provider, DePelchin has focused on children's care, not their legal status.

At a recent conference in D.C., where the head of DePelchin's adoption and post-adoption unit received an award for her work, the state of Texas received an award for increasing interstate adoption placements. Debra Emerson said that award was given for the department's successful collaborative efforts.

Mary Christine Reed, Director, Texas Foster Youth Justice Project, summarized her organization's work and services provided to current and former foster youth, which includes a website, and thanked the Commission for the grant that allowed them to publish a guide for youth who are aging out of care. Some 3,500 copies have been printed and it is also available online.

Joyce James announced that Debra Emerson will be retiring in November, and congratulated her on her years of service.

ADJOURNMENT

Justice O'Neill thanked everyone for attending and reminded everyone of the next meeting February 12, 2010. The meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.



Children's Commission

SUPREME COURT OF TEXAS PERMANENT JUDICIAL
COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

Supreme Court of Texas
Permanent Judicial Commission for
Children, Youth and Families

REPORT TO THE COMMISSION
February 12, 2010

201 W. 14th Street
Austin, Texas 78701

**Supreme Court of Texas
Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families
Report for November 13, 2009 Meeting**

MINUTES– November 13, 2009 meeting (adoption pending), **TAB 1**

COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

There are no membership changes at this time.

COLLABORATIVE COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

Armin Steege, Vice President of Programming at Austin Children’s Shelter is replacing Gena VanOsselaer.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

There are no committee membership changes to report.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES / REPORTS

Basic Grant Committee Report from 01/20/10 - meeting minutes, Tab 5

1. Bench Book – The Bench Book Committee met on January 18, 2010. In attendance was Judge Ginny Schnarr, Senior Judge Lamar McCorkle, Senior Judge John Specia, Judge Robin Sage, Staff: Tina Amberboy, Teri Moran.

At the January 18th meeting the committee agreed upon the project's direction, tools and format. It will be "housed" at OCA while it will look to users as though it is housed at TCJ, because users will access it through TCJ's website, with a password- protected login. Judges will also be able to login to Lexis for caselaw and statutory references.

As of February 1, 2010, the commission staff will devote 15 hours per week to adding content to the software/web tool called Flare. Judges Schnarr and Sage are making final edits to the Adversary, Status Hearing, Appeals, and Adoption chapters. Staff will make the final edits to the remaining statutory chapters, which will be what’s included in Phase I of the BB when it’s launched in August 2010.

2. Appleseed PMC Project – Appleseed completed its interview stage of the project and formed a multidisciplinary advisory board to evaluate its study results and to develop 8 to 10 recommendations for reducing permanency barriers for kids who are in the state's permanent managing conservatorship (PMC), especially those who have been in PMC for a long time. The advisory committee met December 17 for preliminary discussions about recommendations and will meet again January 30, 2010, to discuss recommendations in greater detail.

The Advisory Committee members were chosen because they are familiar with the study findings that reinforce known problems, such as youth reporting that they've not had a

voice in court, that most stakeholders interviewed or surveyed – including a wide spectrum of attorneys, judges, youth and other stakeholders – say they believe that the overall quality of legal representation statewide for PMC children suffers from a lack of attorneys well-trained in CPS cases and/or lack of local resources that would adequately compensate attorneys who either volunteer for or are assigned CPS cases. Whether attorneys are assigned to children or families as soon as is optimal, and whether court-ordered representation continues as long as is optimal may correlate with the size of a county's budget, study findings suggest.

The report is due mid 2010, in advance of the 2011 Legislative Session.

3. TYC/CPS Project –In January 2009, the committee discussed a project that would focus on legal representation of kids in long term care and placed in TYC facilities and State Schools. As a result, Advocacy Inc., applied for a grant from the ReesJones Foundation for a three year project to provide attorney ad litem representation to all youth who have disabilities, are in long-term foster care, and placed in either TYC or State Schools. ReesJones awarded Advocacy Inc \$75,000 for the project in October 2009, and the Commission awarded \$50,000 in August 2009.

Advocacy Inc.'s project to hire two attorneys to provide legal representation statewide for dually managed youth has gotten off the ground, with both attorneys hired. During the course of the project, the attorneys will meet with the youth, review medical records, speak to doctors and institutional staff, and provide zealous advocacy in the court system through representation at DFPS placement review hearings, which are held at least every six months. An evaluation of data regarding improved outcomes as a result of the focused representation is one of the primary objectives of this project.

The Commission had awarded in August 2009 at this committee's recommendation a \$50,000 CIP grant award to this project. However, thanks to Advocacy having also received grants from ReesJones, Meadows Foundation and Texas Equal Access to Justice, it has elected to forgo using CIP money this year and intends to request 100K for year two of its project, when private foundation funding is not readily available. The committee agreed to revisit this issue at its next meeting.

4. Round Table Series – The goal of the Round Table Series is to advance ideas that result in sound executive agency policy, carefully planned legislation, and improved judicial handling of child protection cases. The first Round Table, held in February 2009, brought together state child protection leaders to discuss a recent 5th Circuit case regarding child protective services investigations. The second Round Table, held in June 2009, brought together judges, attorneys, mediators, CASA, child welfare agency representatives, and prosecutors to discuss Child Protective Services (CPS) mediations.

A third Round Table is scheduled for Feb. 18th, and focus on how to use data to keep kids from getting stuck in foster care. The RT will examine data from around the state relative to kids who are in the PMC of DFPS with and without termination, and how they are exiting and when, and propose tools for judges / jurisdictions to help reduce the PMC population on their docket and to identify practices that will prevent rebuilding the population. Part of the data used to evaluate and examine the various locations throughout the state comes from Foster Court Improvement, which is a tool that

provides AFCARS data at a county and district court level, but is difficult to understand and requires some training to use it successfully.

5. Legal Representation Study – The Children’s Commission has been conducting a study of how legal representation is handled around the state.

Proposed Contents of Legal Representation Study Report will include an introduction and executive summary, copies of each survey/questionnaire, an explanation of the approach/methodology, summaries of responses to each question in the surveys/questionnaires broken down by urban v. cluster court responder, and an overview of five example states/other jurisdictions and their child protection court systems, including Colorado, California – Los Angeles, Michigan, Washington, Connecticut.

The report will also spotlight Texas Judicial/Legal practices to give more in-depth look at how certain courts approach different aspects of the child protection cases, such as Bexar County’s Children’s Court Facility, Adoption Procedures and “Adoption Day” and Mandatory Orientation for Attorneys. In Travis County, the report will highlight Office of Parent Representation, Office of Child Representation, and Model Court, the Tarrant County Family Drug Court, and the Central Texas CPC and implementation of Specialty Docket Case Management System.

The report will include suggestions and recommendations gathered from study participants and interviewees and will be summarized, rather than attributed to an individual or a jurisdiction, and will include arguments both in favor of and against in the discussion/analysis of each. Suggestions submitted by interviewees will also be included, for example a suggestion that parents should receive a handout explaining the child protection court process and providing helpful contact numbers for assistance. The report would state the suggestion and list both possible benefits and potential problems associated with such an approach. It will also include an Appendix with court-by-court/county-by-county breakdown of “Court Coordinator” survey responses – i.e. appointment methods, rate of pay etc. These are the only answers that will be attributed to specific courts. All other responses will be categorized as originating either in an urban area or a cluster court.

Interviews that have been completed to date: Courts – Harris County, Dallas County, Tarrant County, Travis County, Central Texas CPC, Centex CPC, CPC Rio Grande Valley East, Hill Country CPC, Sabine Valley CPC, 4th and 5th Administrative Judicial Regions; Parents – Austin Parent Collaboration Group, Waco Parent Collaboration Group, Parent Guidance Center; Children – Statewide Youth Leadership Council; Attorneys – Over 100 responses submitted to Survey Monkey questionnaire.

Surveys scheduled over the next quarter: Courts -- South Plains CPC, Three Rivers CPC, East Texas Cluster Court, Region Three Youth Leadership Council; Prosecutors – We will continue identification process and scheduling/conducting telephone interviews; DFPS Supervisor Questionnaires – Supervisors in each of the 11 DFPS regions have received the survey from their Legal Relations Specialists and will submit responses by February 25; Children – Texas Network of Youth Services Spring Camps; Parents –

Clients of Parent Guidance Center will have access to survey and to project management staff should they choose to participate.

The plan for April to June 2010 – Circulate summary of responses to participants whose feedback formed major portions of report so they can clarify/expand on their particular input/suggestions; complete draft report to submit to Commission staff, work group, and Commission members for review and comment, draft report submitted by June 1, 2010.

The plan for June to August 2010 – Eight week review period to gather comments, suggestions, questions from staff, Commission members and work group; suggested revisions collected; interviewees and other participants contacted for any necessary clarifications/additional input or comments; final report submitted to the Commission on or before August 31, 2010.

6. Summit – The five goals the Texas team developed and adopted at the October 15-17, National Judicial Leadership Summit on the Protection of Children in Austin, have either been met or are underway. Two of the goals address Disproportionality and the Commission staff and Texas Center for the Judiciary staff had already initiated a judicial training conference scheduled for May 2010 that addresses implicit bias in judicial decision making. Staff also met with DFPS in January to discuss forming an Education Committee. The final goal, dealing with kids in PMC is being partially addressed by a Round Table on PMC being held on February 18, 2010.

7. CFSR / PIP Child and Family Services Review – Commission staff continues to work with DFPS on the Program Improvement Plan (PIP), focusing primarily on addressing permanency outcomes for children in the long-term conservatorship of the state. The Commission's Executive Director is a member of the CPS PIP team. Proposed PIP strategies include the use of Commission Round Tables which are responsive to permanency outcomes strategies, including mediation (held in June 2009), children stuck in PMC without termination (scheduled for February 2010), and providing appropriate notice to parties for the opportunity to be heard (to be scheduled in 2010).

New PIP Strategy: (Included under PIP Theme # 2: Remove barriers to permanency – especially the practice of Permanent Managing Conservatorship without termination of parental rights)

DFPS has requested Commission support to implement this strategy by providing technical assistance (TA) regarding judicial orders of permanent managing conservatorship without termination of parental rights (PMC w/o TPR) to specific court jurisdictions at the court's request or where statewide data shows the greatest percentages of PMC w/o TPR orders.

A new project focusing on the Valley, the PMC population, lack of mental health and substance abuse resources, lack of placements, the need for improved communication and collaboration among the stakeholders has been launched. Judge John Specia is providing judicial technical assistance to the project.

Other judicial tools that may address PMC issues:

1. Keep DFPS working toward permanency outcome: develop new Texas Family Code (TFC) section 263.502(c)(7) Placement Review Report and new TFC section 263.503(a)(6) & (7) Placement Review Judicial Finding;
2. Tool to re-engage parents: develop new TFC section 263.503(b) Placement Review Judicial Action to order DFPS to provide services to parent for not more than six months;
3. Tool to review old grounds of PMC w/o TPR under TFC section 161.004; and
4. Tool to review new grounds for TPR after PMC w/o TPR under new culpability in TFC section 161.001 (F) child support and 161.001 (N) visitation and best interest.

8. *Statewide Taskforce on Disproportionality*—A conference entitled Implicit Bias in Judicial Decision-making will be held on May 10 & 11, 2010, and will be opened by Chief Justice Wallace Jefferson. The training will be 12 hours, broken down into three parts. The first segment will focus on state data, historical background, and institutional racism and power. The second part will focus on judicial strategies in use in other jurisdictions around the county that have been successful in addressing this issue. The third part of the training focuses on assisting the Texas judges in attendance with identifying a strategy that can be used in their own jurisdiction as well as ideas on how to evaluate the effectiveness of it.

New Grant Funded Projects:

Harris County Infant and Toddler Court – In November, Judge Bonnie Hellums briefed the Basic committee on her court's grant application for \$100,000 to create a court docket specifically for CPS cases involving infants and toddlers aged 0 – 3. The court would function similarly to judge Hellums' existing drug court and the project would include collecting and reporting data on certain court performance measures. At the time, there was no money in the basic budget to fund the project however, since that time Advocacy Inc has informed the Commission that due to the overwhelming support from private funding sources, the 50K awarded in October 2009 is not needed until October 2010. That allowed the committee to reconsider Harris County's proposal on 1/20/10. The committee agreed to recommend funding of 50K for one year.

Update: This grant was reviewed by the Basic Committee and recommended for funding on 1/20/10. After speaking with Eric Cadow from Harris County subsequent to 1/20/10, it was agreed to that Harris County would submit an amended application due to changes in circumstances dealing with the method of evaluation proposed in the original grant application, and with regard to the use of the funds to pay the salary of a coordinator. Although Mr. Cadow was aiming to submit a new application by 2/1/10, as of 2/9/10, Harris County agreed that submission at the April meeting would provide an appropriate amount of time to work out additional details. This matter will be submitted to the Basic committee for re-review of the method of evaluation and use of funds at its April committee meeting. It will be submitted to the commission for approval at the 4/30/10 meeting.

Grant Amendments:

Texas CASA – In 2009 part of CASA’s grant award and program activities included a program called Transitioning Youth Initiative (TYI). Due to a delay in implementing the two TYI project pilot sites budgeted in the FY 2009 CIP Partnership Grant, Texas CASA had \$27,800 in unspent contractual grant funds at the end of the FY 09 grant period. CASA understood that the contractual costs could be extended through February 2010 so that Texas CASA would have a full year of funding for these pilot sites. However, due to a misunderstanding, the matter was not brought before the Commission to seek approval for CASA to use the unspent funds beyond the end of the 2009 fiscal year. CASA submitted an Amended Award Statement with an explanation of how the funds will be spent on February 4, 2010. It is included under Tab 6.

Because the Commission authorized the expenditure of the funds in 2009 in this manner, and the timing was such that they were spent, Staff is recommending that the Commission allow CASA to use the unspent funds from last year by adding them to the FY 2010 Award Statement.

This grant amendment needs a motion and a second for approval of this grant.

Training Committee Report from 01/08/10 – meeting minutes, Tab 5

1. NACC attorney Training -- Through CIP funding and with the support of the Commission, the National Association of Counsel for Children (NACC) conducted 14 one-day trainings around Texas for attorneys representing children, parents, and DFPS in CPS cases during 2009. The training covered state and federal statutory material, case law, and best practices for representation in these complex cases in an effort to improve the quality of legal representation in child abuse and neglect cases and benefit the families involved with our child welfare system. The NACC used national and Texas experts as well as experienced local attorneys to provide the training. NACC attorney training was held December 4 in Corpus Christi. Hard copies of the Texas-specific manual were recently shipped to the more-than 700 NACC training registrants. Evaluations for the most part were favorable or very favorable. The manual is posted on the Children's Commission's web site.

2. Red Book Training -- Approximately 150 attorneys attended the NACC’s advanced attorney training, called Red Book Training, in Austin (9/23), Houston (10/28), and Dallas (11/7), and gave good feedback for the training.

3. NACC Child Welfare Law Conference -- The NACC multi-disciplinary child welfare law conference is scheduled for October 20-23, 2010, in Austin. The annual NACC conference offers nationally known expert speakers on multi-disciplinary topics related to legal representation in child abuse and neglect cases. The deadline for abstracts is April 1, 2010. In January 2009, the Commission approved \$100,000 to sponsor the conference; this includes offering scholarships for attorneys to attend the conference as well as formation of a workgroup to work with the NACC to develop the

curriculum for the conference. Two commission members, Carlyne Rodriguez and Fairy Rutland, plus Gerry Williams, General Counsel at DFPS, and commission staff are participating in this workgroup.

4. *Child Welfare Law Certification* -- In May 2009, the Texas Board of Legal Specialization approved the application of the NACC to offer child welfare law certification to qualifying Texas attorneys. Fourteen Texas attorneys applied for the 2010 certification exam. The application deadline for the 2011 exam is May 31, 2010.

5. *Scholarships for Child Abuse and Neglect Track at Advanced Family Law* -- The committee approved funding to provide scholarships to attorneys for the day-long Child Abuse and Neglect Track at the State Bar of Texas Annual Advanced Family Law Conference in August 2010.

6. *Scholarships to NITA Trial Advocacy Conference* -- The committee approved funding to provide scholarships to attend the National Institute for Trial Advocacy's (NITA's) training at the Rocky Mountain Child Advocacy Institute in May 2010.

7. *Funding for Local Training* -- The committee approved funding to pay expenses incurred to bring expert speakers and trainers to local jurisdictions for legal training.

8. *Scholarships for National Conferences* -- In FY2009, Training Grant funds were used to send Texas attorneys to a national conference on parental representation in CPS cases, and according to participants, it was a very worthwhile conference. The committee approved FY2010 funding to provide scholarships for future national training conferences, such as the American Bar Association (ABA) Parent's Attorney Conference or Children and the Law Conference.

9. *Prosecutor Training* -- The committee approved work with the Texas Children's Justice Act to develop or implement prosecutor training.

10. *Drug court Training Workgroup* -- The workgroup, whose members include Judge DuBose, Judge Smith, Judge Garcia, Judge Sakai, and Ms. Elias-Perciful, conducted its first meeting December 10, 2009. The next meeting is set for February 26, 2010. The committee approved funding to develop and implement drug court training.

Judicial Training Grants

The Texas for the Judiciary (TCJ) conferences in 2010

NCJFCJ National Conference on Juvenile and Family Law, March 14-17, Las Vegas. There were more than 80 applicants with 60 scholarships awarded.

The Harris County Beyond the Bench is scheduled April 21-23. This annual training brings together a comprehensive list of stakeholders in the child-protection system from a particular region for a two-day cross-disciplinary training that includes open communication and collaboration, brainstorming, and problem solving as well as

discussion of best practices. Stakeholders who participate include judges, prosecutors, CASA, CPS, foster parents, educators, mental health/substance abuse professionals, public health professionals, law enforcement, the Texas Workforce Commission, educators, former foster youth, and parents formerly involved with CPS.

Implicit Bias in Judicial Decision-Making, May 10-11, Bastrop. TCJ will hold a judicial conference regarding implicit bias in judicial decision-making and tools for judges to address this issue. The conference planning workgroup has planned the agenda and identified speakers.

Associate Judges Conference, July 5-7, 2010, Austin. This annual conference is for Texas associate judges who hear the bulk of child-welfare cases and includes IV-D judges. The conference provides education to equip associate judges to better handle their difficult caseloads.

NCJFCJ Annual Conference, July 18-21, San Diego.

CPS Judges Conference, August 4-6, San Antonio. This annual conference is designed specifically for judges who hear child-protection cases and focuses on best practices and cross-disciplinary issues. Commission staff is working with the Texas Center for the Judiciary regarding curriculum for this conference.

OCA Judicial Education

CPC Judges Conference -- The Office of Court Administration's training is scheduled for October 2010. Although Texas' child protection courts (formerly known as Cluster Courts) are now state-funded, CIP Training grant fund an annual two-day workshop for CPC judges to cover current multi-disciplinary topics.

Technology Committee report from 01/28/10 – meeting minutes, Tab 5

1. CPCMS – The system is stabilized relative to all user requests submitted post-launch. Additional user requests for enhancement are being evaluated and unless they are critical they are being held until spring when OCA will start working on CPCMS V2.0. Link to the System Utilization Guidelines, as directed by the Presiding Judges: <H:\JUDICIAL COMMISSION - CYF\Commission Meetings\02-12-10\CPCMS Full Utilization Guidelines 12-18-09.pdf> And, the User Guide can be found at <http://www.courts.state.tx.us/oca/texdeck/CPCMSUserGuide12-17-09.pdf>

2. Security – OCA is also developing additional authentication / security for CPC judges being enhanced via a token / key fob which randomly generates numbers every minute and that each judge uses to access the CPCMS from any computer anywhere. The token / fob technology requires the additional level of security which involves entering a series of numbers prior to the user id and password.

3. Functional Requirements Study (FRS) – Revision of the functional requirements specifications (FRS) reference model and all the new documentation for

FRS, version 2.0 has been completed. Link to the following to access the FRS 2.0 web page:
<http://www.courts.state.tx.us/oca/texdeck/frd2/texdeck%20functional%20requirements.htm>

4. Distribution of CPCMS – Non CPC counties and courts (to District Courts) is underway. OCA has done four demos for Tarrant, Bexar, Harris, Travis, and the Conference of Urban Counties (CUC). OCA is providing the code for CPCMS so that any county interested would not have to start from scratch to develop the source code. But, counties must take over the administrative responsibility to integrate and manage the code once they have it. The contract between OCA and the recipient spells out what OCA is agreeing to, and what the receiving county agrees to do once they get it. OCA is also exploring the possibility of using CIP funds to employ a person who would support the data management / interpretation part of the county's use of the software to help identify judicial practices. This would be similar to the recently filled OCA position that serves as a liaison to the Child Protection Courts.

5. Data Exchange – This work is being led by NCSC. There hasn't been much activity in the last quarter, but there is a conference call scheduled for February 9 hosted by NASCIO. The discussion will focus on Colorado's success in using NIEM for data exchange between the courts and child welfare agency.

6. Legal Representation Study – For more information, please see the Basic Committee portion of this report.

7. Storage Technology – The Commission is about to form an Education Committee as directed by the Summit Action plan adopted by the Texas Team at the National Judicial Leadership Summit in October. One issue the new committee will address is keeping track of the education records of youth in care. Because they are such a mobile population, ensuring their records keep up with them is a difficult task. Although the records can be likened to medical records, they are actually more difficult to manage because of how independent school districts are structured in Texas. The Education Committee, in partnership with the Technology Committee will discuss with the DFPS and TEA the possibility of developing some type of innovative technology that would provide aging-out youth a token that would allow them access to their education (and possibly medical) records from any computer, such as at a public library or even at a doctor's office or at school – similar to the technology provided CPC judges to access their docket and case files from any computer.

Grant Projects

Dallas County Videoconferencing – Dallas County submitted a report to the Commission, which in brief states that they are getting an update on pricing, and that the court is working on processes to implement the project. Mr. Wilson offered to stop and visit the county for an update within 30 days. Judge Bonicoro requested that Mr. Wilson visit with her before he makes the trip.

Tarrant County Case Management Project – Tarrant County was considering developing its own CPCMS-type model, and was awarded \$350,000 of CIP money for

the project. As of 2/03/10, Tarrant County decided that it could not execute the contract currently in place and would submit a modification to their contract / award statement no later than April 1st, 2010 for consideration by the Technology Committee at its April 8, 2010 meeting so the information could be included in the Report to the Commission on April 30, 2010.

Budget changes to Technology Budget

The committee recommends de-obligating the \$100,000 earmarked for video conferencing because only \$125,000 would remain in the budget for other projects in 2011. The committee could re-dedicate the \$100,000 to video conferencing, or not re-dedicate it and adopt a wait-and-see attitude, considering the uncertainty of federal funding past FY 2011. This recommendation is based in part on the fact that \$125,000 would not be enough for a project manager or contractors to support CPCMS enhancements, if that need should arise, or any other similar endeavor. Judge Jones agreed that with the uncertainty of federal CIP Training Grant funding past FY 2010, we should adopt a more conservative approach with funds that are not already obligated.

Mr. Wilson added that the Task Force on Indigent Defense could possibly provide funds to cover video conferencing under the right circumstances. If this committee receives an application for or interest in funding for a video conferencing project from a county, we check with the TFID about possibly coordinating funds or benefits.

COMMISSION BUDGET ITEMS

Basic Projects Budget, Tab 4, Pages 1

The Basic Grant under Tab 4, Page 1 represents the amount of CIP funds available at the beginning of the FY (10/01/09), and amendments sought by staff.

1. The Commission operating budget needs to be increased from \$28,000.00 to \$45,000.00 to more accurately reflect the amount of funds spent on operations for 12 months, based on the actual amount spent in FY 2009 (\$42,373.48).
2. The Jurist In Residence line item from \$12,000.00 to \$28,000.00 to cover the funds needed to fully utilize the JIR for 12 months, based on the actual amount spent in FY 2009 (\$24,989.05).
3. Texas CASA's grant award needs to be increased from \$210,000.00 to \$237,800.00 to would allow CASA to complete of the Transitioning Youth Initiative Program that was launched in 2009, but did not use all of the FY2009 funds allocated. Those funds were returned to CIP at the end of the last FY.
4. The TYC/CPS line item should be reduced from \$60,000.00 to \$10,000.00 to reflect the return of the \$50,000.00 awarded in August 2009 to Advocacy Inc. Staff

recommends that the returned \$50,000.00 be allocated to Harris County's Infant and Toddler project once the application has been amended and approved by the committee.

Training Budget, Tab 4, Page 2

Staff is seeking ratification of the allocation of dollar amounts as represented on the Training Grant Budget document dated 2/12/10.

Technology Budget, Tab 4, Page 3

Staff is seeking ratification of the allocation of dollar amounts as represented on the Data Grant Budget document dated 2/12/10.

Basic CIP Budget 2/12/10

Grant funds in account as of 10/01/09		\$2,010,014.80
Overhead = 126,992.90 (yr) / 10,583.00 (mo) Salaries, Fringe, Staff Travel, Supreme Court Support Services & Supplies, Equipment		(\$126,992.90)
Subtotal		\$1,883,021.90
Supreme Court Judicial Commission for Children, Youth, & Families Operating Budget	Travel, printing, memberships, room rental, staff training, misc.	(\$45,000.00)
Jurist in Residence	Judicial Subject Matter / Judicial Technical Assistance	(\$28,000.00)
Commission Round Table Series	Issue specific collaborative meetings involving local and state-level stakeholders.	(\$15,000.00)
Texas CASA	Costs of staff to enhance recruitment efforts and leadership training, including transitioning youth program	(\$237,800.00)
Office of Court Administration – Judicial Support	Supports travel and other administrative costs of the courts, and training.	(\$20,400.00)
Alamo Children’s Center – ChildSafe	Staff to improve services to drug courts.	(\$46,083.00)
National Adoption Day	Pay for court related training and adoptive / foster parent recruitment efforts.	(\$5,000.00)
Tarrant County Challenge	Grants or pay for staff and services in local drug courts.	(\$100,000.00)
Texas Foster Youth Justice Project	Pay for hotline and staff for legal representation of kids in PMC.	(\$80,000.00)
Texas Lawyers for Children Website	Provide resources and information to attorneys and child welfare judges.	(\$250,000.00)
Office of Parental Representation	Pay for new model of representing primary custodial parents in child protection cases. *See note below	(\$100,000.00)
Office of Child Representation	Pay for new model of representing children in child protection cases. *See note below	(\$100,000.00)
Bench Book	Committee meeting expense. TCJ fees to load BB onto website, manage ids & passwords and maintain.	(\$30,000.00)
Study of DFPS and TYC Population (Advocacy Inc Project)	Committee meeting expense (10k), and AAL representation project (50k).	(\$10,000.00)
Harris County Infant and Toddler	Specialty court in Harris County focusing on zero to three toddlers / siblings, modeled after National Zero to Three Program	(\$50,000.00)
Subtotal		\$765,738.90
Unexpended 09 funds from Travis County PD offices (permission given to spend the funds after 9/30/09 deadline due to delayed opening of offices		(\$229,822.18)
		\$535,916.72
Approximate Amount for Ongoing / 2011		\$535,916.72

Training CIP Budget 2/12/10

Grant funds in account as of 10/01/09		\$1,732,331.00
Overhead = 126,992.90 (yr) / 10,583.00 (mo)		(\$126,992.90)
Texas Center for the Judiciary 2010 Award		(\$567,278.00)
a. Associate Judges Conference	Annual conference for associate judges hearing child protection cases; includes IV-D judges.	
b. CPS Judicial Conference	Annual conference for judges hearing CPS cases	
c. Beyond the Bench (Harris County)	Annual conference for various stakeholders in CPS system for cross-disciplinary training	
d. National Conferences	Scholarships to attend trainings sponsored by national groups	
e. Implicit Bias in Judicial Decision-making	Conference for judges focusing on implicit bias in judicial decision-making	
Child Protection Court Annual Update (OCA)	Training, equipment, supplies and technical assistance to CPC courts (20,000 in TexDECK)	(\$29,300 .00)
Drug Court Training		(\$40,000.00)
Attorney Training		
a. Scholarships to national conferences	Scholarships for Texas attorneys who represent parties and children in child protection proceedings to attend national conferences	(\$15,000.00)
b. Scholarships to Advanced Family Law	Scholarships for attorneys to attend the one-day Child Abuse and Neglect tract of Advanced Family Law Conference	(\$10,000.00)
c. Trial skills training	Scholarships to attend trial skills training through the National Institute of Trial Advocacy (NITA) in child abuse and neglect cases	(\$40,000.00)
d. Prosecutor training	Work with TCJ and Children's Justice Act to sponsor cps training for prosecutors	(\$5,000.00)
e. Speaker / Trainer Development	Make funds available to judges to help bring in expert speakers / trainers to local jurisdictions to improve legal representation / advocacy	(\$10,000.00)
Child Welfare Law Conference	NACC Annual conference scheduled for 10/2010. Funding will provide scholarships to Texas attorneys for registration fees and speaker travel.	(\$100,000.00)
Child Welfare Law Certification	To be held in Spring 2010 and again in 2011. No funding set aside at this time	0.00
Approximate for 2011 / ongoing		\$788,760.10

Data CIP Budget 2/12/10

Grant funds in account as of 10/01/09		\$1,297,200.40
Overhead = 126,992.90 (yr) / 10,583.00 (mo)		(\$126,992.90)
TexDECK Project 2010 Award	Contract with OCA which includes Redesign of the Texas CPCMS, Project Management, FRS updates, promoting other data projects	(\$236,742.00)
Legal Representation Study	Conduct a study to examine the quality of legal representation and its impact in Texas	(\$207,568.00)
Software Development	Grant to Tarrant County to develop software using the FRS	(\$350,000.00)
Video Conferencing	Provide Grants to Dallas County (\$50,000) and other locations to promote children attending court hearings.	(0.00)
Dallas County Video Conferencing	To promote children attending court hearings	(\$50,000.00)
Software Development for Counties	Grants to counties to implement local versions of CPCMS	(\$100,000.00)
Approximate amount for 2011 / ongoing		\$225,897.50

**The Supreme Court of Texas
Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families**

Basic Committee Meeting Minutes

January 20, 2010

This meeting was held at noon on January 20, 2010, via teleconference. The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 12:05 p.m. The following were in attendance.

Name	Status	Method Attending
The Honorable Robin Sage	Chair	Teleconference
The Honorable Bonnie Hellums	Member	Teleconference
The Honorable Olen Underwood	Member	Teleconference
The Honorable Elma Salinas Ender	Member	Teleconference
The Honorable Peter Sakai	Member	Teleconference
The Honorable Cheryl Lee Shannon	Member	Teleconference
Mr. Joe Gagen	Member	Teleconference
Ms. Coleen McCall	Member	Teleconference
Ms. Tina Amberboy	Staff	In Person
Ms. Teri Moran	Staff	In Person
Mr. David Halpern	Guest /Collaborative Council member	Teleconference
Ms. Barbara Elias-Perciful	Guest /Collaborative Council member	Teleconference

I. Call to Order

Judge Robin Sage, chair, called the meeting to order at 12:07 p.m.

II. Roll Call/ Introductions

Judge Sage introduced members.

III. Adoption of Minutes from November 5, 2009, meeting

Judge Sage moved to adopt the minutes by general consent.

IV. Update on Basic Projects

a. Bench Book

The Bench Book committee held a meeting January 18th and agreed upon the project's direction, tools and format. It will be "housed" at OCA while it will look to users as though it is housed at TCJ, because users will access it through TCJ's website, with a password-protected login. A Commission staff member will devote 15 hours per week to adding content to the software/web tool called Flare, between February 1 and May 31, 2010. Judges Schnarr and Sage are making final edits to the Adversary and Status Hearing chapters – which will be the first two uploaded.

b. Appleseed Project

Appleseed has formed a multidisciplinary advisory board to evaluate its study results and to develop 8 to 10 recommendations for reducing permanency barriers for kids who are in the state's permanent managing conservatorship (PMC), especially those who have been in PMC for a long time. The advisory committee

met December 17 for preliminary discussions about recommendations and will meet again January 30, 2010, to discuss recommendations in greater detail. Appleaseed will update Commission members at the next (February 12) Commission meeting. Committee members are familiar with the study findings that reinforce known problems, such as youth reporting that they've not had a voice in court, that most stakeholders interviewed or surveyed – including a wide spectrum of attorneys, judges, youth and other stakeholders – say they believe that the overall quality of legal representation statewide for PMC children suffers from a lack of attorneys well-trained in CPS cases and/or lack of local resources that would adequately compensate attorneys who either volunteer for or are assigned CPS cases. Whether attorneys are assigned to children or families as soon as is optimal, and whether court-ordered representation continues as long as is optimal may correlate with the size of a county's budget, study findings suggest.

c. TYC/CPS

Advocacy Inc.'s project to hire two attorneys to provide legal representation statewide for dually managed youth has gotten off the ground, with both attorneys hired. The Commission had awarded in August 2009 at this committee's recommendation a \$50,000 CIP grant award to this project. However, thanks to Advocacy having also received grants from ReesJones, Meadows Foundation and Texas Equal Access to Justice, it has elected to forgo using CIP money this year and intends to request 100K for year two of its project, when private foundation funding is not readily available. The committee agreed to revisit this issue at its next meeting.

d. Round Tables

The topic of the next Round Table discussion, scheduled for Feb. 18th, will examine data from around the state relative to kids who are in the PMC of DFPS with and without termination, and how they are exiting, to develop tools to help judges / jurisdictions reduce the PMC population on their docket and to identify practices that will prevent rebuilding the population. Part of the data used to evaluate and examine the various locations throughout the state comes from Foster Court Improvement, which is a tool that provides AFCARS data at a county and district court level, but is difficult to understand and requires some training to use it successfully.

e. Summit

The five goals the Texas team developed and adopted at the October 15-17, National Judicial Leadership Summit on the Protection of Children in Austin, have either been met or are underway, according to Ms. Amberboy. Two of the goals address disproportionality – and Commission and Texas Center for the Judiciary staff had already initiated a judicial training conference scheduled for May 2010 that addresses implicit bias in judicial decision making.

f. Legal Representation Study (LRS)

The Commission LRS study team composed of Amy Fitzgerald and Jessica Lynch, has been gathering surveys and steadily conducting interviews, via teleconference and in person, of parents, children, department staff, CASA volunteers, and others. The two travel to jurisdictions for interviews and also have attended parent collaboration meetings and foster alumni meetings. For more details, Ms. Amberboy referred members to an LRS report she had emailed them previously.

g. CFSR / PIP & Technical Assistance

Commission staff has worked with DFPS staff on the Program Improvement Plan (PIP) from the beginning. DFPS continues to revise the PIP final report based on ACF feedback – and it is now on its 6th incarnation. The Commission will contribute to the PIP in part by conducting the February 18 Round Table on PMC, as well as with another planned Round Table on notice to parties.

V. Grant Applications

a. Harris County

Judge Bonnie Hellums briefed the committee on her court's grant application for \$100,000 to create a court docket specifically for CPS cases involving infants and toddlers aged 0 – 3. The court would function similarly to judge Hellums' existing drug court and the project would include collecting and reporting data on certain court performance measures. The committee discussed this matter again on 1/20/10 because Advocacy Inc has informed the Commission that due to the overwhelming support from private funding sources, the 50K awarded in October 2009 is not needed until October 2010. That allowed the committee to reconsider Harris County's proposal on 1/20/10. Colleen McCall expressed concern about funding beyond one year and Ms. Amberboy discussed a possible decision on CIP reauthorization by this summer. Judge Sage requested that Judge Hellums include in her report recommendations to other courts on how to replicate similar projects. Judge Sakai made a motion to fund the project for 50K for one year and Judge Underwood seconded. The committee voted unanimously to recommend to the commission that the project be funded in this manner. Judge Hellums abstained from the vote.

VI. Update on Annual Reports

a. CIP Annual Report

Ms. Amberboy noted that Commission staff had submitted the more-than 30-page annual report to ACF, which can be viewed on our website.

b. Commission/Supreme Court Annual Report

Commission staff will complete and submit the annual report to the Supreme Court by the next Commission meeting on February 12.

VII. Report from Barbara Elias Perciful

Barbara Elias Perciful updated the committee about recent Texas Lawyers for Children survey data. The committee was provided a report for their review prior to the call and can be linked to here: <..\..\Commission Meetings\02-12-10\TLC Commission Report Feb 2010.doc>. Ms. Elias-Perciful pointed out that 92.3% of judges responding and 97.56% of attorneys responding said the Online Center helps them achieve the best interest of the children involved in their cases.

VIII. Information from David Halpern

David Halpern, a member of the Commission's collaborative council discussed his interest in listening in on the call. David is a board member of the Seedlings Foundation, which is a program that provides mentors for children of incarcerated parents. David has expressed interested in a joint project with the commission.

IX. Committee composition

While there are no new members to consider at this time, Judge Sage said she and the rest of the committee are open to membership changes as the committee sees fit.

X. Next meeting date

The next meeting will be held at noon on April, 7, 2010. The next two meetings will also be held at noon July 14, 2010, and October 13, 2010.

XI. Adjourn The meeting adjourned at 12:52.

**The Supreme Court of Texas
Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families**

**Technology Committee Meeting Minutes
January 28, 2010
Noon to 1 p.m.**

Name	Status	Method Attending
Judge Karin Bonicoro	Chair	In Person
The Honorable Gil Jones	Member	Teleconference
Judge Oscar Gabaldon	Member	Teleconference
Ms. Linda Uecker	Member	Teleconference
Mr. Robert Nolen	Member	Teleconference
Mr. Bryan Wilson	Member	In Person
Ms. Tina Amberboy	Staff	In Person
Ms. Tiffany Roper	Staff	In Person
Ms. Simi Denson	OCA Staff	In Person
Mr. Tim Kennedy	OCA Staff	In Person
Ms. Mena Ramon	OCA Staff	In Person
Mr. Duke Hooten	Guest	Teleconference

Not in Attendance: Robert Nolen, Allan Van Fleet, Liz Kromrei, Carl Reynolds, Jason Hassay, Catherine Babbitt

I. Call to Order

Judge Karin Bonicoro, chair, called meeting to order shortly after 12 p.m.

II. Roll Call/ Introductions

Judge Bonicoro called roll and introduced everyone.

III. Adoption of Minutes

It was noted that the minutes from the October meeting were adopted as part of the Commission Report at the November 13, 2009, Commission meeting.

IV. New Member

Former Children's Commission Grant Manager, Bryan Wilson, who now works for the Task Force on Indigent Defense, was introduced as a newly appointed committee member. Bryan's knowledge and experience will benefit the committee, Judge Bonicoro said.

V. Report on Current Projects

a. Report on Texas Data Enabled Courts for Kids (TexDeck) – Tim Kennedy / OCA

Tim Kennedy was first to report on current TexDECK projects. Mr. Kennedy pointed out that he has sent an email earlier in the day with a one-page attachment listing all subprojects within

TexDECK umbrella.

i. Regarding CPCMS Production, Mr. Kennedy reported that it is stabilized relative to all user requests submitted post-launch. Additional user requests for enhancement are being evaluated and unless they are critical they are being held until spring when OCA will start working on CPCMS V2.0.

ii. The second item reported dealt with additional authentication / security for CPC judges being enhanced via a token / key fob, which randomly generates numbers every minute and that each judge would use to access the CPCMS from any computer anywhere. Judge Bonicoro added that currently CPC judges must use only their user name and password. The token / fob technology requires an additional level of security which involves entering a series of numbers prior to the user id and password.

iii. Update on the Functional Requirements Study (FRS). Mr. Kennedy mentioned several documents he sent to the committee the prior week. He specifically requested that everyone review the Case-Study document. This document represents a history and lessons learned from the development. Judge Bonicoro stated that she had reviewed, but not all members had the chance to review it by the time of the call. Ms. Amberboy delivered edits to Tim Kennedy for incorporation. No one else offered any edits to the Case Study. Mr. Kennedy posed the question of whether the Case Study was being submitted for review at this committee meeting. Judge Bonicoro asked if anyone would like more time for review and the members agreed that additional time was needed. Therefore, adoption of the Case Study was deferred to the April meeting. Bryan Wilson also pointed out that when the Commission originally adopted FRS, it authorized the committee to authorize or adopt amendments to FRS, including the Case Study. Thus the Commission will not need to approve the Case Study or FRS V2. Mr. Wilson commented that the Case Study might be useful for state or national level review or conferences.

iv. The fourth item dealt with distribution of CPCMS to non-CPC counties and courts (to District Courts). OCA has done four demos for Tarrant, Bexar, Harris, Travis, and the Conference of Urban Counties (CUC) through the TechShare contract. Tarrant, Dallas, Bexar are members of the TechShare program. Tarrant County is evaluating the software. Travis County will be provided a copy of the software in the near future. The CUC is also evaluating a copy of the software. Each entity (county or court) must sign an agreement that limits OCA's exposure. Tarrant County and TechShare are presenting the agreement to their respective boards about signing off on limiting OCA's liability with regard to ongoing support.

Judge Bonicoro added to the conversation by explaining that OCA is providing the CPCMS source code so that any interested county would not have to start from scratch to develop the case management source code. But, counties must take over the administrative responsibility to integrate and manage the code once they have it. The contract between OCA and the recipient spells out what OCA is agreeing to, and what the receiving county agrees to do once they get it.

Mr. Kennedy continued that OCA had participated in a conference this week for courts and local governments in which he had the opportunity to meet with IT professionals from other counties, including Collin County. Collin County is interested in the software and CIP funds to use it. Ms.

Amberboy posed the question about whether it would be CIP dollars with a user-county to employ a person who would support the data generation part of it. CPC's have a staff to collect data and help them interpret what their data is saying. Because part of what the Commission does is to identify judicial practices, it seems logical to try and get that same information to a court, and analyze judicial practices in the district courts as well.

Judge Bonicoro added that there would need to be some means to verify that certain data measures are being entered. Training would be necessary to promote uniformity in data entry and tracking practices. Ms. Amberboy agreed and said that details would need to be worked out before a project could be fully proposed or launched.

Duke Hooten added that Judge Cindy Wheless from Collin County is considering hiring him to manage the data input / output piece of using CPCMS. He stated that he is willing to undergo training, with the OCA IT department, and anywhere else recommended. He also committed to providing information gathered to other judges to identify the kinds - of data that should be captured and the kinds of reports that should be generated in some type of standardized, process. He is ready to move to Collin County, if approved. Judge Wheless is also interested in the public defender office for parents.

Judge Bonicoro invited Mr. Hooten to observe her court's use of the CPCMS system, and meet with her staff. She also suggested that he seek a guided demonstration of the system from OCA's IT staff. Mr. Hooten mentioned that Judge Byrne has offered to help move this project forward, with grant writing assistance and advice. Ms. Amberboy asked whether it sounded like an idea the committee could support. Mena Ramon added that the committee might want to consider hiring a person who could provide support on a statewide basis rather than in just one county, adding that it might be more cost effective.

Judge Bonicoro also added that she wanted to bring to the committee's attention, at the April meeting, an idea that status, permanency and placement review reports be standardized among the CPCs and the Department. It is her opinion that if these standardized reports were adopted, the efficiency of extracting the information for input into CPCMS would be improved, and data input would be more efficient. Mr. Wilson added that adopting such a form could eventually lead to software capabilities that would enable populating CPCMS automatically with the information. The committee agreed to take up the forms at the next meeting. Concurrently, Ms. Amberboy agreed to follow up with Ms. Ramon and Judge Bonicoro about the project, and Mr. Hooten agreed to get in touch with Tim Kennedy and Collin County IT personnel. Mr. Wilson suggested that he also speak with the county about what kind of data they have currently, what they would need to migrate data, and where the county in general and county commissioner stand on support for the project. He also raised the question of whether there will be integrity monitoring. To get a clear understanding of the process a county must know where they are, in order to know where they need to go. Judge Bonicoro mentioned that any county contemplating the implementation of a new case management system must anticipate the initial need for significant data input. Some person will have to sit and type the information into the system, which can be time consuming. The county must factor this into implementation time, and personnel demands. Mr. Hooten added that there are nine judges dealing with CPS cases in

Collin County, and because it is no longer centralized, the need for greater understanding of these cases has become more critical – hence their interest in the case management system.

v. Last item – Data Exchange. This work is being led by NCSC. There hasn't been much activity in the last quarter, but there is a conference call scheduled for February 9 hosted by NASCIO. The discussion will focus on Colorado's success in using NIEM for data exchange between the courts and child welfare agency.

Judge Bonicoro mentioned that one of the issues we're dealing with is whether the kind of data we exchange raises ex parte and/or confidentiality issues. There has been an effort related to the automated registry to determine the propriety of sharing information. Ms. Amberboy added that there is an interim charge out of the Senate Jurisprudence Committee regarding information sharing between youth-serving agencies in Texas, which would include courts. It focuses on at-risk youth, which would capture foster youth. The interim charge relates to legal and technology barriers to sharing information. Another question is whether some information shared with a court would be ex parte. Attendees can send in questions and perhaps Texas should submit questions to see if any other state has dealt with these issues up to now. Ms. Amberboy offered to develop questions and share them with Judge Bonicoro for her approval.

b. Legal Representation Study (LRS)

Ms. Amberboy reviewed the study, which this committee funds. She referred members to the LRS progress report she emailed them before the meeting.

The Commission LRS study team composed of Amy Fitzgerald and Jessica Lynch, has been gathering surveys and steadily conducting interviews, via teleconference and in person, of parents, children, department staff, CASA volunteers, and others. The two travel to jurisdictions for interviews and also have attended parent collaboration meetings and foster alumni meetings. A report is due in October 2010.

c. Dallas County Video conferencing

Dallas County submitted a report to the Commission, which in brief states that they are getting an update on pricing, and that the court is working on processes to implement the project. Mr. Wilson offered to stop and visit the county for an update within 30 days. Judge Bonicoro requested that Mr. Wilson visit with her before he makes the trip.

d. Tarrant County Juvenile Case Management System

Mr. Kennedy reported earlier that Tarrant County is considering developing its own CPCMS-type model, and has been awarded \$350,000 of CIP money for the project. The Commission is waiting to hear back on the progress. Ms. Amberboy requested that the committee make changes to the grant agreement as appropriate if their deliverables change significantly. Judge Bonicoro asked Mr. Kennedy follow up and prepare a report for the committee's April 8 meeting.

VI. New Business

a. Youth storage technology

Ms. Amberboy mentioned that the Commission is about to form an education committee as directed by the Summit Action plan adopted by the Texas Team at the National Judicial Leadership Summit in October. One issue the new committee will address is keeping track of the education records of youth in care. Because they are such a mobile population, ensuring their records keep up with them is a difficult task. Although the records can be likened to medical records, they are actually more difficult to manage because of how independent school districts are structured in Texas.

Ms. Amberboy stated that Carl Reynolds had suggested the development of some type of innovative technology that would provide aging-out youth a token that would allow them access to their education (and possibly medical) records from any computer, such as at a public library or even at a doctor's office or at school. A partnership with DFPS would have to be formed to implement such a challenging project. Judge Bonicoro recommended that an TEA executive be recruited to join the committee.

b. Status, Permanency and Placement Hearing Forms (Karin Bonicoro)

See page 3, paragraph 5.

VII. Voting issues – redistribution of budget

Ms. Amberboy sought the opinion of committee members regarding de-obligating the \$100,000 earmarked for video conferencing because only \$125,000 would remain in the budget for other projects in 2011. The committee could re-dedicate the \$100,000 to video conferencing, or not re-dedicate it and adopt a wait-and-see attitude, considering the uncertainty of federal funding past FY 2011.

Ms. Amberboy noted, for example, that \$125,000 would not be enough for a project manager or contractors to support CPCMS enhancements, if that need should arise, or any other similar endeavor. Judge Jones agreed that with the uncertainty of federal CIP Training Grant funding past FY 2010, we should adopt a more conservative approach with funds that are not already obligated.

Mr. Wilson added that the Task Force on Indigent Defense could possibly provide funds to cover video conferencing under the right circumstances. If this committee receives an application for, or interest in, funding for a video conferencing project from a county, we can check with the TFID about possibly coordinating funds or benefits.

Judge Bonicoro asked for a motion to move the \$100,000 previously allocated for video conferencing into the ongoing, general funds category and to revisit the matter later. Ms. Uecker made the motion, Judge Gabaldon seconded, and the measure passed unanimously.

Ms. Uecker asked whether federal grant guidelines disallow moving funds in this manner, and Mr. Wilson said they do not. Judge Bonicoro asked whether the Commission would need to vote to adopt this specific budget change, and Ms. Amberboy explained that the Commission votes on updated budgets as a whole per committee.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 1 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 8, at noon.

**THE PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION
FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES**

TRAINING COMMITTEE

January 8, 2010, Meeting Minutes

The meeting was conducted via conference call.

Attendees: Judge Camille DuBose, Chair, Judge John Specia, Pam Parker, Alice Emerson, Shaneka Odom, Judge Ellen Smith, Barbara Elias-Perciful, Joyce James, Judge Lamar McCorkle, Judge Richard Garcia, Tracy Harting

Members not in attendance: Fairy Rutland, Cathy Cockerham, Debra Emerson, Chadwick Sapenter

Staff: Tiffany Roper, Teri Moran

CALL TO ORDER

Judge DuBose called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m.

APPROVAL OF JULY AND OCTOBER 2009 MEETING MINUTES

Judge DuBose asked for a motion to approve the July 2009 meeting minutes to include revisions Ms. Elias-Perciful had requested at the October 2009 meeting. Judge Smith made a motion, Ms. Parker seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Judge DuBose asked for a motion to approve the October 2009 meeting minutes. Judge Smith made a motion, Ms. Parker seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.*

*Ms. Elias-Perciful joined the conference call after the July and October 2009 minutes had been approved, and noted that the October meeting minutes had not accurately reflected her requested revision to the July minutes. Because the minutes were already approved, the requested addition will be made to the January 2010 minutes. This is an accurate paraphrase of Ms. Elias-Perciful's original statement at the July 2009 meeting:

The Texas Board of Legal Specialization approved the application of the NACC. Ms. Elias-Perciful expressed the view that no CIP funds should be spent on child welfare law certification unless the exam includes questions on Texas legal and practice issues.

Ms. Elias-Perciful also asked that her hourly rate shown in the federal match table at the end of the minutes be changed from \$65 to \$60. This change will appear in future minutes.

GRANT AND FUNDING UPDATE

It is still unknown whether the federal government will fund the CIP Training grants beyond FY 2010. The committee reviewed a revised FY2010 budget (see Appendix A, attached) that included the following changes:

- The award of \$21,000 more than estimated in Training Grant funds to the Children's Commission

- Funding set aside for drug court training as well as changes to attorney training projects
- ACTION:** Judge DuBose asked for a motion to approve the revised FY 2010 budget (see appendix A, attached). Ms. Elias-Perciful made a motion, Judge Smith seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

UPDATE ON COMMITTEE PROJECTS

NACC Attorney Training 2009

The last NACC attorney training was held December 4 in Corpus Christi. Hard copies of the Texas-specific manual were recently shipped to the more-than 600 NACC training registrants. Evaluations for the most part have been favorable or very favorable. The manual is posted on the Children's Commission's web site. This committee previously approved using roughly \$25,000 to conduct more NACC training sessions in two or three cities in FY 2010. Over the course of the 17 trainings, it was learned that many jurisdictions provide basic attorney training for attorneys who represent children and parties in CPS cases. Ms. Roper suggested using the set-aside \$25,000 for other projects, as discussed below.

Red Book Training

Ms. Roper reported good feedback from the roughly 150 participants who attended the Red Book Trainings, which occurred in Austin (9/23), Houston (10/28), Dallas (11/7).

Child Welfare Law Certification

There are now 14 Texas applicants for the 2010 certification exam. The application deadline for the 2011 exam is May 31, 2010.

NACC Annual Child Welfare Law Conference 2010

The NACC-sponsored conference is scheduled for October 20-23, 2010, in Austin at the downtown Hilton. The deadline for abstracts is April 1, 2010. In January 2009, the Commission approved \$100,000 to sponsor the conference; this includes offering scholarships to attend the conference as well forming a workgroup that will work with NACC to develop the curriculum for the conference. Fairy Rutland, Mari Kay Bickett, and Gerry Williams were recommended for inclusion in this workgroup.

TCJ conferences in 2010

- NCJFCJ National Conference on Juvenile and Family Law, March 14-17, Las Vegas. There were more than 80 applicants with 60 scholarships awarded.
- Harris County Beyond the Bench is in the planning stages with a target date of August or September 2010.
- Implicit Bias in Judicial Decision-Making, May 10-11, Bastrop.
- Associate Judges Conference, July 5-7, 2010, Austin. Judge Andy Hathcock is in charge of the curriculum committee.
- NCJFCJ Annual Conference, July 18-21, San Diego.
- CPS Judges Conference, August 4-6, San Antonio. Judge DuBose is in charge of the curriculum committee.

CPC Judges Conference

The Office of Court Administration's training is scheduled for October 2010.

ATTORNEY TRAINING

Members discussed the following proposed projects and funding amounts listed in the revised budget (attached to minutes).

- a) \$10,000 – Provide scholarships for the Child Abuse and Neglect track at the State Bar of Texas' Annual Advanced Family Law Conference in August.
- b) \$40,000 – Provide scholarships for approximately 15 attorneys to attend the National Institute for Trial Advocacy's (NITA's) training at the Rocky Mountain Child Advocacy Institute in May 2010.

According to NITA statements to Ms. Roper, attorneys who attend the May 2010 course will be qualified to act as trial advocacy trainers and can form a cadre of trainers here in Texas. Judge Specia asked for clarification of the statements as in the past, NITA has required additional specialized "train the trainer" courses to become NITA-certified trainers. Both Judge Specia and Judge McCorkle attended the train the trainer courses in the past and offered to assist with the Texas training cadre.

- c) \$10,000 – Provide funds to pay expenses incurred for judges to bring expert speakers and trainers to their local jurisdictions.
- d) \$15,000 – Provide scholarships for national training conferences. An example would be the ABA's Parents' Attorney or Children and the Law Conference.
- e) \$5,000 – Provide \$5,000 to work with administrators of the Texas Children's Justice Act (CJA) to provide prosecutor training.

ACTION: Judge DuBose asked for a motion to approve the five projects and amounts shown above in a) through e). Ms. Emerson made a motion, Judge Richard Garcia seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Drug court workgroup

This committee previously approved the creation of a workgroup to develop and provide training to drug and other courts, but had postponed deciding how much money to allot the project. The workgroup, whose members include Judge DuBose, Judge Smith, and Ms. Elias-Perciful, conducted its first meeting December 10, 2009. Judge Specia asked to be included in the workgroup; the next meeting is set for February 26, 2010. He suggested planning the training around other previously scheduled trainings.

ACTION: Judge DuBose asked for a motion to approve \$40,000 to develop and implement drug court training. Ms. Elias-Perciful made a motion. Judge Garcia seconded it, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Prosecutor Roundtable

As an information item, Ms. Roper reported that conducting a roundtable to bring prosecutors together to exchange information, best practices, and to generally network, has been suggested, although this committee would not necessarily manage it or fund it with training grant money. She has discussed funding and sponsoring a prosecutor roundtable jointly with CJA.

NEW BUSINESS

To answer the question of how participants are chosen to attend the Children’s Commission Round Table Series, Ms. Roper explained that whichever standing committee (Basic Projects, Training, and Technology) funds and manages a round table discussion creates a workgroup whose members select and invite attendees. Previous round table discussions were more productive when limited to 30 participants. Round table “outcomes” may be disseminated through the Children’s Commission newsletter, the Jurist in Residence letters, or white papers.

Ms. Parker reported that a practice guide for CPS Attorneys was recently completed. Ms. Parker offered to email a link to the guide, which is on the DFPS website, to the committee members.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for noon on March 31, 2010. The committee will discuss whether to hold an in-person meeting in Summer 2010.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 1 p.m.

The following chart is included in the minutes for federal grant matching purposes (hourly rates are estimates and may not reflect actual hourly rate of committee members):

Name	Status	Match	Rate	Amount
Judge Camile DuBose	Member	½ hour	\$85/hr	\$42.50
Judge Ellen Smith	Member	½ hour	67.31	33.65
Judge Lamar McCorkle	Member	½ hour	30.00	15.00
Judge Richard Garcia	Member	½ hour	67.31	33.65
Fairy Rutland	Member	½ hour	100.00	50.00
Alice Emerson	Member	½ hour	30.00	15.00
Barbara Elias-Perciful	Member	½ hour	60.00	30.00
Cathy Cockerham	Member	½ hour	30.00	15.00
Joyce James	Member	-	-	-
Debra Emerson	Member	-	-	-
Shaneka Odom	Member	-	-	-
Tracy Harting	Member	½ hour	30.00	15.00
Chadwick Sapenter	Member	½ hour	30.00	15.00
Tina Amberboy	Staff	-	-	-
Tiffany Roper	Staff	-	-	-
Bryan Wilson	Staff	-	-	-
Teri Moran	Staff	-	-	-
				\$264.80

**The Supreme Court of Texas
Permanent Judicial Commission for Children,
Youth and Families**

**List of Obligations for CIP Grant Funds for 2009 – 2010
Training Grant**

Grant funds in account as of 10/01/09	Includes FY 2008, 2009, and 2010 funds	\$1,732,331.00
Overhead = 126,992.90 (yr) / 10,583.00 (mo)		<\$126,992.90>
Texas Center for the Judiciary 2010 Award		<\$567,278.00>
a. Associate Judges Conference	Annual conference for associate judges hearing child protection cases; includes IV-D judges.	
b. CPS Judicial Conference	Annual conference for judges hearing CPS cases	
c. Beyond the Bench (Harris County)	Annual conference bringing together various stakeholders in CPS system from a particular region for cross-disciplinary training	
d. National Conferences	Scholarships to attend trainings sponsored by national groups	
e. Implicit Bias in Judicial Decision-making	Conference for judges focusing on implicit bias in judicial decision-making that lead to disproportionate representation of minorities in foster care population	
Child Protection Court Annual Update (OCA)	Training, equipment, supplies and technical assistance to CPC courts (20,000 in TexDECK)	<\$29,300 .00>
Attorney Training		
a. Scholarships to national conferences	Scholarships for Texas attorneys who represent parties and children in child protection proceedings to attend national conferences	\$15,000.00
b. Scholarships to Advanced Family Law	Scholarships for attorneys to attend the one-day Child Abuse and Neglect tract of Advanced Family Law Conference	\$10,000.00
c. Trial skills training	Scholarships to attend trial skills training through the National Institute of Trial Advocacy (NITA) in child abuse and neglect cases	\$40,000.00
d. Prosecutor training	Work with TCJ and Children's Justice Act to sponsor cps training for prosecutors	\$5,000.00
e. Speaker / Trainer Development	Make funds available to judges to help bring in expert speakers / trainers to local jurisdictions to improve legal representation / advocacy	\$10,000.00
Child Welfare Law Conference	NACC Annual conference scheduled for 10/2010. Funding will provide scholarships to Texas attorneys for registration fees and speaker travel.	<\$100,000.00>
Child Welfare Law Certification	To be held in Spring 2010 and again in 2011. No funding set aside at this time	0.00
Drug Court Training		\$40,000
Approximate for 2011 / ongoing		\$788,760.10*
*this amount includes \$35,400 pmt to NACC		

and \$56,800 pmt to TCJ, both of which were pending on 10/01/09 and which have NOT been deducted yet.		
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The amount listed in line 1 is the amount available per the federal payment management system (PMS) as of 10/01/09 and does not reflect unpaid requests for reimbursement or unpaid payroll/administrative expense. The amounts awarded to each project represent the maximum amount that may be spent on a particular project. The actual amount spent may not meet this threshold. If it exceeds the amount awarded, an amendment, approved by the commission is required. All budget requests and adjustments to projects are approved by the standing committees and are published to the Commission at quarterly commission meetings. Budget adjustments to administrative and overhead expenses are approved by the Commission E.D. and the Supreme Court.



SUPREME COURT OF TEXAS PERMANENT JUDICIAL
COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

Justice Harriet O'Neill, Chair

Tina Amberboy, Executive Director

**AMENDED STATEMENT OF PARTNERSHIP GRANT AWARD
COURT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
FY 2010**

Grant Number: 201-10-0001
 Grantee Name: Texas CASA
 Program Title: Enhancing CASA Volunteer Advocacy Services to Children and Courts
 Grant Period: 10/1/2009-9/30/2010
 Grant Award Amount: \$237,800

The Permanent Judicial Commission for Children Youth and Families (Commission) has awarded the above-referenced grant from the Texas Court Improvement Program (CIP). The individual authorized to apply for and accept grant funds (subgrantee) must sign this Statement of Grant Award and return it to the CIP Grant Administrator. The signed Statement of Grant Award must be on file with the CIP Grant Administrator in order for the subgrantee to receive reimbursements for authorized expenditures. Funding is provided as listed below:

Texas CIP Grant		Total Program	Amount of CIP Funds Awarded	Cash Match	In-Kind Match
a.	Personnel	\$109,053	\$81,790	\$27,263	
b.	Fringe Benefits	\$23,992	\$17,994	\$5,998	
c.	Travel	\$89,376	\$67,032	\$22,344	
d.	Equipment				
e.	Supplies	\$10,850	\$8,137	\$2,713	
f.	Contractual	\$88,430	\$62,847	\$25,583	
g.	Construction				
h.	Other				
i.	Total Direct Charges (sum a-h)	\$321,701	\$237,800	\$83,901	
j.	Indirect Charges				
k.	Totals	\$321,701	\$237,800	\$83,901	

By their signature, the subgrantee agrees to the following:

Standard Grant Conditions:

- To accept the grant award.
- The Subgrantee below agrees to the terms of the grant as written in the CIP Program Instructions issued by CIP and incorporated into this Statement of Grant Award by reference for all purposes.
- To abide by all terms and conditions as stated in the Award Activities (attached) issued by CIP and incorporated into this Statement of Grant Award by reference for all purposes.
- That a violation of any term of the Award Activities, CIP Program Instructions or any applicable OMB Circular may result in the CIP Grant Administrator placing a temporary hold on grant funds, and subject to Commission approval, permanently de-obligating all or part of the grant funds, requiring reimbursement for funds already spent, or barring the organization from receiving future grants.

Disbursement is subject to the availability of funds, and disbursed monthly on a reimbursement basis unless otherwise stated in the subgrantee's Award Activities.

Signature of Subgrantee

Joe Gagen, Executive Director
Name & Title (must print or type)

Texas CASA
Name of Organization

Date

Signature of Grant Administrator

Name & Title (must print or type)

Date

Grant Certifications:

CIP is required to ensure that all CIP subgrantees certify to the best of their knowledge and belief that the subgrantee will comply with the certifications listed below:

Certification Regarding Lobbying

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion

(1) The subgrantee certifies that neither it nor its principals is presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any Federal department or agency.

(2) If the subgrantee is unable to certify to the statement above, such subgrantee shall attach an explanation to this proposal.

Certification Regarding Environmental Tobacco Smoke

Public Law 103227, the Pro Children Act of 1994, prohibits smoking in any portion of any indoor facility owned, leased or contracted for by an entity and used routinely or regularly to provide health, day care, education, or library services to children under the age of 18, if the services are funded by Federal programs either directly or through State or local governments, by Federal grant, contract, loan, or loan guarantee. The law does not apply to private residences, facilities funded solely by Medicare or Medicaid funds, and portions of facilities used for inpatient drug or alcohol treatment. Failure to comply with the provisions of the law may result in a fine of up to \$1000 per day and/or the imposition of an administrative compliance order on the responsible entity.

Additional Certifications

Applicant understands that CIP grants awarded to a governmental entity are governed by OMB Circular A-87 and that CIP grants awarded to a non profit organization are governed by OMB Circular A-110.

Applicant understands that CIP funds expended must be reasonable and necessary to carry out the objectives of the program for which funding is sought.

Applicant understands that CIP funds are paid on a reimbursement basis and must be supported by appropriate documentation.

Applicant understands that funding is subject to approval by the Commission.

Applicant understands that projects funded by CIP must involve meaningful and on-going collaboration of local or statewide stakeholders.

Subgrantee certifies to all of the above

Signature

AWARD ACTIVITIES

Applicant			
Authorized Official Name:		Joe Gagen	
Title:		CEO	
Organization:		Texas CASA	
Address:		1501 West Anderson Lane, Suite B-2	
		Austin, Texas 78757	
Phone:		512 473-2627	
Fax:		512 473-8271	
E-mail:		jgagen@texascasa.org	
Financial Officer Name	Melissa Sarkar	Financial Officer Title	Director of Administration
Program Director Name	Andrea Sparks	Program Director Title	Dir. of Public Policy and Outreach

Requestor is designated as a(n):

- State Agency
 Non-Profit Organization
 Unit of Local Government
 Educational Institution
 Other (describe): _____

Program Type Requested: **Basic Program** **Data** **Training**

Program Title: Enhancing CASA Volunteer Advocacy Services to Children and Courts

I. Program Objective: Texas CASA's objective is to provide consistent, effective GAL and volunteer advocate services to children in the child protection court system through its local CASA programs in order to enhance the safety, permanency, and well-being of those children.

Texas CASA advocates for abused and neglected children in the court system through the development, growth and support of local CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) programs. With Texas CASA's support, local CASA programs recruit, train, and supervise volunteers to serve as court-appointed guardians ad litem (GAL) or special advocates in child protection services cases.

Currently in Texas, there are 69 CASA programs serving 203 counties. In FY 2008, there were 5259 CASA volunteers and 20,451 children served by CASA. Even with all the growth our CASA network has achieved, this represents less than half of the total number of children who were in the state's custody due to abuse and neglect allegations according to DFPS's data book in 2008, the most recent number available (44,928 total). Texas CASA and our local programs strive to serve all children in care who need a CASA advocate and to continually improve our advocacy efforts for these children.

Texas CASA's objective helps to achieve the Commission's strategic plan in the following ways:

Goal 2: Identify and promote best practices to improve outcomes affecting safety, permanency, and well-being in child protection cases.

Providing the courts and children in care with highly effective guardian ad litem and volunteer advocate services in CPS cases through CASA programs is a well-known best practice in improving outcomes

affecting safety, permanency and well-being in child protection cases. (see attached endorsements from the Pew Commission, Conference of Chief Justices, and the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges)

CASA services help courts improve outcomes for children in terms of safety, permanency and well-being in the following ways:

1) CASA advocacy helps judges make better informed decisions in CPS cases.

Judges routinely report that they rely on CASA to give them information they need to make decisions because:

CASA volunteers focus on one case at a time (one child or set of siblings) and bring a wealth of knowledge and understanding about the case to the courts and the parties

CASA volunteers spend an average of 12 hours a month for an average of 30 months on each case. They provide specific, detailed, and useful information and recommendations regarding the child's best interests to the courts in written and oral reports and testimony.

CASA volunteers are highly trained and supervised by professional staff

CASA volunteers receive at least 30 hours of pre-service training and at least 12 hours a year in ongoing training in topics including child welfare, abuse and neglect, the court system, mental illness and psychotropic medications, substance abuse, educational resources, and domestic violence. The courts themselves generally participate in and approve this training and then swear the CASA volunteers into the courts' service. Volunteers are carefully screened before being admitted into the program and supported and closely supervised during their tenure by CASA program staff.

2) CASA brings additional capacity to improve outcomes to the child protection court system and foster care system. CASA volunteers:

- help locate potential relative placements and/or healthy family connections for the child;
- help ensure that siblings achieve and maintain placements together or at least regular contact;
- broker resources in the community that may assist the child and family;
- improve on the timeliness of hearings and other proceedings;
- regularly visit the child in the placement and report to the court and parties on the child's well-being and safety;
- interview family members and others who may be needed as supports for the child, resources, placements, or witnesses;
- testify at hearings and trials regarding the best interest of the child;
- monitor the case and compliance with court orders between hearings;
- provide a consistent, trusted, committed adult the child can depend on for support and advocacy during the time he or she is in foster care;
- encourage timely visitation, adoption services, and ICPC placements;
- assist with a child's participation in court hearings;
- monitor and report on the child's health, mental health, and psychiatric care;
- monitor and assist with the child's educational progress and goals;
- assist youth in PMC to find permanency through relative placement, termination and adoption, or even reunification when in the child's best interests; and
- help youth in PMC who cannot find permanency to successfully transition into independent living.

All of these services help to improve court processes and increase safety, permanency, and child and family well-being.

Goal 3: Improve awareness about the need to strengthen courts for children, youth, and families in child protection cases.

1. Collaborate with the executive and legislative branches and with partners in the child protection community to strengthen courts that are responsible for child protection cases.

3. Improve awareness and involvement among the business community and the philanthropic community.

Texas CASA and our network of 69 CASA programs and their volunteers throughout the state are valuable partners to the courts in increasing awareness about the need to strengthen courts in child protection cases. CASA engages the community in problem-solving on these issues by recruiting CASA volunteers, of course, but also by conducting awareness activities and campaigns, including:

- Adoption Day activities
- Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month (April) activities
- Partnerships with the Rainbow Rooms, Children’s Advocacy Centers, and other community partners to reach out to the public for toys, books, and other items needed to serve children in foster care
- Public awareness PSAs, radio tours, newspaper articles and letters to the editor, ads, interviews, and other events about the child protection system and CASA’s role
- Utilizing business partners on Texas CASA’s and local programs’ boards and corporate advisory boards

Goal 4: Improve the quality of legal representation in child protection cases

CASA volunteers provide GAL representation of children in the majority of jurisdictions throughout the state. Texas CASA’s objective -- to provide consistent, effective GAL and volunteer advocate services to children in the child protection court system in order to enhance the safety, permanency, and well-being of those children – will directly improve the quality of GAL representation in child protection cases.

Indirectly, CASA volunteers and program staff routinely share their insight and information about the case with attorneys for children and parents, which can improve the quantity and quality of information that attorneys rely upon in representing their clients. CASA volunteers also provide needed testimony, evidence and contacts to witnesses.

II. Activities: Texas CASA is requesting funding for the following activities:

- (1) strengthening local CASA programs’ capacity to provide effective and consistent advocacy for children through volunteers; and**
- (2) expanding CASA services into additional counties.**

1. Strengthening local CASA programs’ capacity to provide effective and consistent advocacy for children through volunteers.

This activity will consist of several strategies:

- Regional Volunteer Recruitment Workshops and Assistance to Individual Programs

Texas CASA plans to conduct 6 regional workshops on strategic volunteer recruitment and retention starting in the winter of 2009. These trainings will build on the “Round Up” word of mouth recruitment strategies, but with a broader focus on strategic volunteer recruitment and retention that and an emphasis on helping programs come up with targeted and innovative volunteer recruitment plans that can be implemented and then shared with the CASA network. Training participants will include multi-disciplinary teams from each local program -- executive directors, program directors, recruiters, volunteer coordinators, and board members.

We also plan to offer individualized recruitment assistance to programs that need help in recruiting and retaining volunteers, contracting with expert CASA recruiters where available.

This training and assistance will complement Texas CASA’s new multi-pronged statewide volunteer recruitment campaign for FY 2010-2012, called “Recruitment 360°” The campaign will include coordinated media and public relations (PSAs, brochures, websites, social media, earned media, print ads.

Staff involved: Chief Executive Officer, Program Operations Director, Director of Public Policy & Outreach, Program Services Specialist, Program Operations Specialist, Training Specialist, and Event Planner.

- Volunteer Education Training

Texas CASA will provide training for local CASA staff on how to conduct an effective pre-service training for new volunteers with the new National CASA volunteer curriculum. National and Texas CASA standards require that the pre-service training for volunteers follow the National CASA curriculum and consist of at least 30 hours. Therefore, it is crucial that local program staff understand how to effectively use the new curriculum in conducting training. This curriculum incorporates best practices, adult-learning methods, and new technology in training volunteers. Approximately 30 volunteer trainers will attend this training. National CASA program staff will facilitate the training. The training will include instruction on how to effectively engage stakeholders like DFPS, the judiciary, attorney’s ad litem, and foster parents in volunteer training. Staff involved: Program Operations Director, Program Services Specialist; Program Operations Specialist, Training Specialist, and Event Planner.

- Advocacy and Volunteer Management Training

As in the past, Texas CASA will provide advocacy training for CASA advocacy specialists on effective advocacy in the child protection court system and on volunteer management. These CASA staff can manage up to 30 volunteer advocates, with 45 cases at a time, under Texas CASA and National CASA standards. This training is crucial to the retention of CASA volunteers because it will increase CASA advocacy coordinators’ skills and knowledge in managing and motivating the volunteers under their charge so that these volunteers can provide the best and most consistent case advocacy possible. DFPS staff and/or attorneys who handle child protection cases will participate in these trainings.

The training in Austin, for which we expect about 30 attendees, will cover core competencies in:

- the CASA/GAL role,
- the court system and mandated timelines and hearings,

- CPS,
- case advocacy, including promoting permanency and concurrent planning,
- volunteer management and development, and
- working through common case scenarios.

Staff involved: Program Operations Director, Director of Public Policy & Outreach, Program Services Specialist, Program Operations Specialist, Training Specialist and Event Planner.

- Executive Director Leadership Institute

Texas CASA will conduct a training for local CASA program executive directors in February 2010. This training is an annual event that has been previously funded by the CIP and that each year focuses on different topics. This year, the training will focus on:

- Providing CASA executive directors leadership skills to effectively maintain and grow local program capacity to increase the number of children the program is able to serve.
- Providing CASA executive directors leadership skills to strengthen program services, empowering staff and volunteers to achieve best practices in advocacy and engagement with children and families.
 - The training will equip leaders to provide forward thinking vision and leadership to their staff and volunteers. From a position of strength in every area of program management, leaders will learn how to move their programs from good to great, improving the level of advocacy and increasing the likelihood of serving every child who needs a CASA.

Staff involved: Program Operations Director, Director of Public Policy & Outreach, Program Services Specialist, Program Operations Specialist, Training Specialist, and Event Planner.

- Training of New Executive Directors

Texas CASA plays an important role in orienting new executive directors of CASA programs to Texas CASA's standards, advocacy for children, program operations, and leadership principles. The executive director is the leader of any CASA program and it is essential that they have the knowledge, skills, and resources to lead their staff in building capacity to recruit, train and effectively manage volunteers and to collaborate effectively with community stakeholders, DFPS, and the court system, including providing opportunities for cross-training.

Staff involved: Program Operations Director, Program Operations Specialist, Training Specialist and Event Planner.

- Program Director/Staff Training

Texas CASA plans to facilitate two training events designed specifically for CASA program directors and staff that supervise and assist the volunteer advocacy efforts for children. Each of these trainings will be a 12 hour event. Planned topics for one event include sharing the best practices promoted by the 0-3 initiative and the drug court initiative. Planned topics for the second event center on volunteer management best practices and supervisory skills necessary for developing the skills, talents of CASA volunteers – strategies to create investment and retain volunteers.

Staff involved: Program Operations Director, Program Services Specialist, Program Operations Specialist, Training Specialist, Event Planner.

- Volunteer Council

Texas CASA plans to facilitate in-person meetings and quarterly phone conferences for volunteers nominated by local programs to serve on the Texas CASA Statewide Volunteer Council. The Council membership was formed and will hold its first meeting the summer of 2009. Membership objectives are to provide recommendations for CASA volunteer pre-service and in-service training and recommendations to enhance support, assistance and development of volunteer advocates, and to influence collaboration and advocacy for CASA with other stakeholders to promote better child outcomes and help children achieve true permanency. The Council will also be asked to review initiatives including but not limited to transitioning youth, zero to three, and drug courts, and will be challenged to develop ideas to promote best practices. Additionally the Council will be asked to discuss and address issues specific to CASA advocacy such as the challenge faced by local CASA's with the out of county placements by many children, the need to have frequent in person contact with children, and the many other barriers out of county placements have for these children and their families.

- Web Based Learning Modules

Texas CASA provides many core and specialized trainings for local programs each year. In order to provide this information to new staff and to reach staff that may not be able to attend these trainings, we would like to be able to take the information from these trainings and develop some on-line learning modules and webinars that can be made available following the trainings. It seems a very cost effective way to provide this to a wider audience and to re-inforce learning objectives and information by providing a way for attendees to "review and re-access" information.

- Strengthening CASA's Service to Transitioning Youth

The Texas CASA network of local programs has been increasingly interested in providing meaningful advocacy to youth aging out of the foster care system in order to bolster their chances at becoming healthy, independent adults. There is a continued need for expanded CASA services to transitioning youth and, at the same time, establishing best practices for CASA programs engaged in this important work.

The focus of the work will be on ensuring that the youth served have:

- reached their educational goals;
- made healthy connections to adults who will support them as they age out of care and beyond;
- have indicated an understanding of how to access PAL and other benefits afforded to them by the foster care system upon aging out;
- a plan to achieve a successful transition to independent living or another appropriate living situation.

Texas CASA plans to bring together this spring a work group of CASA programs funded under Texas CASA's TYI (Transitioning Youth Initiative) project that have been a part of serving transitioning youth to develop:

- Best practices learned to date
- A training module for the CASA programs and staff participating in the grant projects and other CASA programs that want to learn more about serving transitioning youth
- A training module for the volunteers themselves – both pre-service and ongoing training in topics
- Discuss each CASA program's progress and outcomes thru February 2010

Staff involved: Program Operations Director, Director of Public Policy & Outreach, Program Services Specialist and Training Specialist.

2) Expanding into counties previously unserved by CASA

Texas CASA is continually expanding the number of counties served with CASA by assisting existing local CASA programs to expand into unserved counties and by helping to develop new CASA programs in unserved counties.

Texas CASA's expansion protocols, as summarized here, have been shown to provide effective methods of sustainable program development and expansion throughout the state. Texas CASA routinely responds to and tracks inquiries about developing new CASA programs from local community members in unserved counties who have identified a need for a CASA program in their community. Before deciding to develop a CASA program in a particular community, Texas CASA staff considers many factors, including the county's population, child population, and number of children in CPS custody, and whether the county will be able to support a CASA program on its own or in conjunction with neighboring CASA programs. If review of these factors favors CASA program development, we work to help the interested community members solidify judicial, DFPS, and community support for the development of new CASA program. Texas CASA then begins work with community leaders to guide and support their efforts to: (1) develop an independent CASA program; (2) develop a CASA program within an existing nonprofit agency; or (3) work with a neighboring CASA program to expand its services into the unserved county. In the program's development, Texas CASA works with local judges, child protection cluster court judges, CPS staff, child welfare boards, Children's Advocacy Centers, foster parents, attorneys ad litem, and local governments, agencies, businesses, and organizations. Texas CASA assists in the formation of a steering committee, which includes members from these stakeholder groups and other community volunteers. With Texas CASA's guidance and support, the steering committee raises public awareness of the CASA program and its objectives, secures additional community support, resources and potential volunteers, recruits a board of directors, and completes an application for membership to Texas CASA and National CASA. Texas CASA provides start-up funding to the new program through state funds allocated for this purpose. Texas CASA also assists with the program's incorporation, bylaws, policy development, training, and nonprofit status. After the CASA program is developed, Texas CASA provides ongoing support, technical assistance and training to the new board of directors and executive director to ensure that the new CASA program is able to initiate and sustain volunteer services to children. On occasion, it may be necessary for a CASA program to transfer one or more of the counties in its service area to an existing neighboring CASA program or to a new CASA program in order to ensure that the children and courts in that county/ies are adequately served. The reasons for the transfer may be financial, geographical, or generally operational. As part of its expansion services, Texas CASA has assisted with a few of these transitions in the past several years and will continue to do so whenever necessary to provide better CASA service and more volunteers for courts and children.

Staff involved: Program Operations Director and Program Services Specialist.

III. Method of Evaluation:

Texas CASA will track, record, and report to CIP milestones, accomplishments, timelines and the attainment of the program objective of increasing the number of volunteers recruited and retained by CASA programs. Texas CASA's Grant Director will be responsible for the evaluation of the program. Specifically, Texas CASA will track, record, and report the following information:

Training Activities

Texas CASA currently tracks, records, and reports all of our training events to applicable grantors. We also ask participants to complete an evaluation of trainings offered. We will track, record, and

report to the CIP all of the training events described in the Activities section above. For all of these trainings we will report to CIP:

- the name and dates of the training,
- curriculum topics and presenters,
- the number of participants, and
- a summary of participant evaluation findings, which will include findings as to how participants will use what they've learned in the trainings.

Increase in Volunteers Recruited and Retained

Lastly, Texas CASA will track, record, and report the increase in numbers of new volunteers recruited and retained. We expect to see an increase in total statewide number of volunteers in FY 2010, when compared to FY 2009, and another increase in FY 2011 and FY 2012.

Expansion of CASA Services to More Counties and Children in Texas

Texas CASA currently tracks and will report to CIP:

- (1) new CASA programs;
- (2) new counties served;
- (3) written feedback from judges working with new CASA programs 6 months after the first case assigned.

Transitioning Youth Initiative

Texas CASA will track and report in FY 2010:

- the work group's progress
- the number of volunteers trained and assigned to transitioning youth case in the funded programs to date
- the number of youth served to date
- the progress of the funded programs in at least three areas (to be determined by the work group), which may include:
 - whether the youth served by CASA have obtained a high school diploma or equivalent;
 - whether the youth served by CASA have made healthy connections to adults who will support them as they age out and beyond;
 - whether the youth served by CASA have indicated an understanding of PAL and other benefits afforded to them by the foster care system upon aging out.

IV. Budget Narrative (Include information on match):

Personnel/Fringe

Salary and fringe costs of the CIP Grant are allocated to the activities listed above, according to time spent on each activity.

Travel

Travel and lodging for the Program Operations Director, the Director of Public Policy and Outreach, the Program Services Specialist, the Program Operations Specialist, the Event Planner and the Training Specialist for expansion, training, and volunteer recruitment assistance activities, allocated by

participation at each activity. It also includes facilities rentals, food for trainings, and lodging for the participants at the following trainings: Advocacy and Volunteer Management Training, Volunteer Education Training, Executive Director Leadership Institute, 2 Program Staff Trainings, and the Volunteer Council. It also includes lunch for the Regional Recruitment Workshop participants.

Supplies

Supplies include supporting materials, printing and handouts for all training events.

Contractual

Contractual expenses include:

- speaker fees and their related charges: Regional Recruitment Workshops \$1,200, Program Director/Staff Training, \$4,000, ; ED Leadership Training \$9,000, New Executive Director trainings \$3,500; meeting room charges, \$250.
- audio visual costs for all trainings \$400;
- contracting with a professional to develop and implement the web-based training, \$1,382;
- contracting with one or more persons to provide individual volunteer recruitment assistance on site to local programs, \$41,000; and
- \$27,800 in pass-through funds for 3 CASA programs continued participation in the Transitioning Youth Initiative (TYI) project (plus \$13,900 in cash match provided by the local CASA programs);

plus match expenses for trainings.

Budget

	Texas CIP Grant	Requested			
		Total Program	Amount of CIP Funds Requested	Cash Match	In-Kind Match
a	Personnel	\$109,053	\$81,790	\$27,263	
b	Fringe Benefits	\$23,992	\$17,994	\$5,998	
c	Travel	\$89,376	\$67,032	\$22,344	
d	Equipment	-			
e	Supplies	\$10,850	\$8,137	\$2,713	
f.	Contractual	\$88,430	\$62,847	\$25,583	
g	Construction	-			
h	Other	-			
i	Total Direct Charges (sum a-h)	\$321,701	\$237,800	\$83,901	
j	Indirect Charges				
k	Totals	\$321,701	\$237,800	\$83,901	

Requested Grant Period: The Grant becomes effective October 1, 2009, and ends September 30, 2010 unless terminated or otherwise modified.

Amount requested with amendment: \$237,800 Amount funded: \$237,800

COLLABORATIVE COUNCIL REPORT – FEBRUARY 12, 2010 MEETING

I. Update on DFPS-DePelchin Tracking of Children and Youth in PMC with Termination of parental rights

At the last meeting of the Commission, Conni Barker mentioned the effort of DePelchin children's Center to work with CPS to move to adoption as many PMC children in our foster homes as possible. Judge Specia asked that the Commission be kept apprised of the progress of this effort. Below is an update on this effort, which we hope can be expanded.

- About 200 of the children in DePelchin foster care are Permanent Managing Conservatorship (PMC) with termination of parental rights.
- DePelchin and other providers know the legal status of children who enter their foster care systems, but do not get routine updates on status changes.
- Several months ago, DePelchin's Director of Child Welfare Services requested updates on their status, and learned that slightly over 200 were PMC with termination of parental rights.
- DePelchin shared the list with foster care staff and asked them to provide updates regarding the current status of permanency planning for the case as they understood it. This was combined into one document and forwarded to CPS Adoption Prep Program Directors with a request to have their staff review and provide updates to the status. When CPS and DePelchin staff met January 22, if there were differences in what CPS staff reported and what DePelchin staff reported, this was discussed and follow up recommended. In several cases, the CPS Program Director was able to call her staff and obtain clarification.
- At the first meeting, 60 children and youth were staffed; these were from 3 of the 8 units at DFPS Region 6 who have charge of some of these children.
- Both DFPS and DePelchin found this very helpful, because it keeps everyone on top of these children's cases, keeps communication lines open, and reminds the supervisors to keep their staff focusing on these adoptable children and youth.
- Some of the children have recently been placed for adoption.
- Some are primary medical needs children and are more difficult to adopt—DFPS has begun specialty adoptive family recruiting for some of them.
- For some children, the home study has to be updated on the foster family so that they can adopt the children. For others, the record has to be redacted so the foster parents can read the file, and that is now being done so that an adoption can be processed. These 2 categories of families will be processed first.
- CPS Region 6 will follow the practice of first looking at whether the foster parents want to adopt the children, and if so, they will follow the practice of giving preference to the foster family.
- CPS and DePelchin foster care want this to happen on a regular basis so that they keep on top of the children's cases. They will therefore plan to meet every month or 2, and DePelchin will request regular (probably quarterly) updates on the legal status of the children and youth in DePelchin's foster care system.
- Sometimes the CPS supervisors are told by their staff that the foster family does not want to adopt, and the CPA understands that the parents do want to do so. These monthly or bimonthly staffings will lessen the risk of mixed or conflicting messages and make sure that the foster family's intent is clear.

- DePelchin's Director of Child Welfare Services has informed the other members of the Houston-area Adoption collaborative (7 agencies) that CPS would like to follow this process with the other providers in the collaborative. DePelchin's Director, who had previously been with CPS, will assist the other agencies in making the right inquiries of the right people in Region 6, so that those agencies are able to do this as well.

Adoption: Region 6 meeting re PMC children & adoption January 2010

II. Update on Travis County Office of Parental Representation (OPR)

What is the Travis County Office of Parental Representation: The Travis County OPR is a public defender modeled office created to provide legal representation and advocacy services to indigent, primary parents in Travis County who are accused by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services of abuse and or neglect of their children.

When did the Travis County OPR begin: The Managing Attorney for the Travis County OPR was hired in February, 2009. The office was fully staffed and began taking cases in May, 2009.

What is fully staffed: The Travis County OPR has the following FTE's (full-time equivalents): 1 Managing Attorney, (thirteen years experience in child welfare litigation); 3 Staff Attorneys (thirty years combined experience in child welfare, ranging from DFPS Regional Attorney to Family Based Safety Service Case Worker); 1 Social Worker; 1 Paralegal; 1 Legal Secretary; and 1 Administrative Associate. For the Fall, 2009 semester, the office benefited from 5 student interns; 3 from the UT School of Social Work, Masters Program and 2 from Huston-Tillotson Undergraduate Studies Program. For the Spring, 2010, the office has 7 student interns and 1 licensed attorney intern.

What is the expectation of this office: The Travis County Office of Parental Representation is intended to and expected to improve the legal representation provided to primary, indigent parents accused of abusing and/or neglecting their children, as afforded by the Texas Family Code Section 107.013.

How is this expectation to be accomplished: The Travis County Office of Parental Representation works to provide competent, early, zealous and consistent legal representation to our clients balanced with comprehensive social work advocacy and social work supported management services. With lawyers and social workers working in conjunction with each other, the hope is that we will better identify the strengths and weaknesses of the parents and birth families; work diligently to protect their rights; help identify, connect with and maximize the use of already existing community resources; encourage our clients to achieve self sufficiency and ultimately rise to the challenge of safely, protectively and permanently raising their children. Thereby improving the outcomes of children and removing barriers that delay children's permanence.

Our Mission: *The Mission of the Travis County Office of Parental Representation is to PRESERVE, STRENGTHEN and SUPPORT Travis County families by: providing early, effective and consistent legal representation and advocacy to indigent parents; and by promoting SELF-SUFFICIENCY through the combined efforts of the family, the community and the court.*

“TO PRESERVE, STRENGTHEN, and SUPPORT”

Our Vision: *The Vision of the Travis County Office of Parental Representation is for Travis County to be a community where families of all cultures and socio-economic groups are RESPECTED and ENCOURAGED to identify and utilize family based and community based supports and services as needed to ensure the safety and permanency of their children while knowing that their family unit will be protected and preserved.*

“RESPECT AND ENCOURAGE”

III. Update on Texas Lawyers for Children (TLC)

Data from Annual Evaluation Instrument: To evaluate the impact of its Online Resource and Communication Center (Online Center) for judges and attorneys handling child abuse cases, TLC sends an annual survey to the judges and attorneys who are registered to use the Online Center. The data from the September 2009 evaluation evidences the following:

1. The primary recurring comment from judges and attorneys was that the Online Center is **“invaluable”** to their work in handling child abuse cases.
2. Numerous examples were given regarding how information from the Online Center enabled attorneys to get better results for the children in their cases, thus **improving outcomes for children**.
3. Judges sent 261 messages through the judicial email network during the last grant period and repeatedly commented about the **tremendous value of having a way to share expertise**.
4. 92.3% of judges responding and 97.56% of attorneys responding said the Online Center **helps them achieve the best interest of the children** involved in their cases.
5. 83.33% of judges responding said the Online Center **expedites reaching decisions**, which can help **move children through the system faster, reduce court delay, and reduce the time children spend in foster care**.
6. Use of the Online Center and number of users both increased in the last year (as in every year), but **usage increased at twice the rate of the number of users**, showing that the increase in usage is not just related to having more users but is based on the judges and attorneys using the Online Center more frequently, **confirming the value** they see in it.
7. 100% of judges responding and 89.47% of attorneys responding said the Online Center **saves them time in their work**, which can help **move children through the system faster, reduce court delay, and reduce the time children spend in foster care**, and can also result in **cost savings** for the state and counties.
8. For those responding, the average **number of hours saved** was up to:
Judges: 83 hours per year
Attorneys: 154 hours per year

9. The judges and attorneys using TLC's Online Center estimate that their cases annually involve almost **57,000 children**. (It is possible this number includes some overlap since a judge and an attorney may be reporting the same child from a case they both handle.)

10. The judges and attorneys using TLC's Online Center **handle cases in 245 of Texas' 254** counties. The 9 other counties handle less than 100 child abuse cases a year, so those using TLC's services span the counties **where most of the child abuse cases in the state are being handled**.

New Resources for Judges: TLC's Consulting Attorney, family law expert Charles Childress, is now available to answer judges' questions through the Online Center. Also, at the request of several judges and because of the cross-over population of abused children in the juvenile justice system, TLC is launching new communication tools for all juvenile court judges in Texas, including an email network, discussion board, and document vault. These new tools are in addition to those being provided to judges handling child abuse cases and those for judges presiding over family drug treatment courts (and judges interested in starting such courts).