



**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 Commission

September 18, 2015

The State Bar of Texas – Texas Law Center

1414 Colorado Street

Austin, Texas 78701

BASIC COMMITTEE REPORT

2.2A Parent Resource Group: Continue hosting and supporting the Parent Resource Group; Reprint and distribute printed and online Resource Guide to assist parents, explore online center with hotline or other direct service delivery.

2016 Action Steps:	Progress Report	FY2016 BUDGET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Host and facilitate meetings and calls for the PR Workgroup. ▪ Maintain Parent Resource Guide ▪ Update written product ▪ Post online with LawBox ▪ Provide reprints and distribute ▪ Translate to Spanish ▪ Convene workgroup to discuss online resource center / hotline or other direct delivery or assistance services through the Texas Legal Services Corporation 	<p>The Parent Resource Guide was completed in May 2015 and is accessible in print and online on the Children’s Commission website as well as many other CC partners and advocate websites. The PRG will be translated to Spanish by May of 2016. The workgroup will continue to confer and meet in FY2016 to discuss additional efforts to establish an online resource center through the Texas Legal Services Corporation, and possibly the development of a video or an app for smartphones. The PRG committee will meet at least once in FY2016.</p>	<p>\$8,600.00</p> <p>Includes 3600.00 LawBox and 5000.00 in-person support, printing</p>

2.2C Disproportionality: Raise awareness and understanding among judges and key stakeholders involved in the legal system regarding racial disproportionality.

2016 Action Steps:	Progress Report	FY2016 BUDGET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop and promote judicial and attorney training on how to apply training and tools designed to reduce institutional racism and bias ▪ Partner with system stakeholders to include disproportionality in cross-systems trainings and in issue-specific workgroups, including one Poverty Simulation Workshop ▪ Help connect judges and lawyers to their communities to develop disproportionality efforts at the local level ▪ Liaise with the Texas Health and Human Services State Advisory Coalition for Addressing Disproportionality and Disparities ▪ Staff and monitor the Judicial Workgroup Addressing Disproportionality Workgroup (JWD) meetings, strategies, timelines, and work product for FY2015, including monthly or quarterly strategy meetings with the JWD Co-Chairs ▪ Include information about Disproportionality and bias in its CPS judicial Bench Boo 	<p>In 2015, the JWD worked on: 1) developing and promoting judicial and attorney training on how to apply tools designed to reduce institutional racism and bias; 2) partnering with system stakeholders to include disproportionality in cross-systems trainings and in issue-specific workgroups; 3) helping connect judges and lawyers to their communities to develop disproportionality efforts at the local level; 4) liaising with the Texas Health and Human Services State Advisory Coalition for Addressing Disproportionality and Disparities; 5) staffing JWD meetings, strategies, timelines, and work product; and 6) updating the CPS judicial Bench Book. The JWD also suggested adding to the CPS Bench Book bench card three questions related to making culturally aware decisions during child welfare hearings. The JDW also met during the 2015 annual judicial conference held in August 2015, and sponsored a workshop at the 2015 Cross-Systems Summit on Collaborating to Achieve Equity that same week August 21, 2015. The committee voted to change the name of the committee to the Judicial Workgroup Addressing Disproportionality or JWD.</p>	<p>\$25,000.00</p>

2.2D Tribal: Educate judges and lawyers about the importance of ICWA, including the context of historical trauma and tools to assist with practical application.

2016 Action Steps:	Progress Report	FY2016 BUDGET
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue the mutually respectful and ongoing relationship with Texas' three federally-recognized tribal nations ▪ Partner with system stakeholders to promote ongoing knowledge and understanding of the ICWA and its importance ▪ Work with national ICWA consultant and Columbia Law School on understanding and implementation of new Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Guidelines and the use of Peacemaking in state courts ▪ Update the ICWA Section and ICWA Bench Cards in the CPS Judicial Bench Book ▪ Continue to support Senior Peacemaker Joann Battise in as Children's Commission member ▪ Staff and monitor the Tribal/State Workgroup meetings, strategies, timelines, and work product for FY2016, including monthly strategy meetings with Senior Peacemaker Battise and DFPS ▪ Partner with DFPS to support the biannual tribal/state collaborative meetings ▪ Partner with the Alabama-Coushatta to support their judicial symposiums with content and finances ▪ Assist with any CIP grant application, as requested and appropriate ▪ Further connections with Ysleta del Sur Pueblo and Kickapoo tribes through the DFPS tribal/state meetings, Annual Conference of the Native American Section of the State Bar and other networking opportunities ▪ Continue to collaborate with the Children's Bureau and the participants of the CIP Peer to Peer Exchange related to the Model ICWA Judicial Curriculum and other best practices for Texas 	<p>In 2015, the Children's Commission continued its collaboration with tribal nations and system stakeholders to promote ongoing knowledge and understanding of the ICWA and its importance. Specifically, the Children's Commission:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) continued to work with stakeholders to develop an ICWA Strategic Plan for Texas; 2) collaborated with the Children's Bureau and the participants of the CIP Peer to Peer Exchange to tailor the Model ICWA Judicial Curriculum and other best practices for Texas; 3) updated the ICWA Section of the Child Protection Law Bench Book; 4) conducted monthly strategy meetings with Senior Peacemaker Battise and DFPS; 5) partnered with the Alabama-Coushatta to support the 5th Annual Alabama-Coushatta Judicial Symposium with content and finances; and 6) furthered connections with Ysleta del Sur Pueblo and Kickapoo tribes through the DFPS tribal/state meetings, Annual Conference of the Native American Section of the State Bar and other networking opportunities. <p>Also, effective September 1, 2015, the Texas Family Code will require judges to ask all parties present at each Adversary, Status, and Permanency hearing whether the child or the child's family has any Native American heritage and identify any Native American tribe with which the child may be associated. In August 2015, six tribal judges attended the Annual Child Welfare Judges Conference for the first time and were honored at a reception held during the conference. The Commission hosted a tribal\state meeting with DFPS and the social services representatives from each of the three federally-recognized tribes.</p>	<p>\$8,000.00</p>
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2.2E Trauma Informed: Support child welfare system efforts to shift toward trauma informed practice.

2016 Action Steps:	Progress Report	FY2016 BUDGET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support Texas CASA efforts to identify and survey trauma knowledge, training available, training accessed, results or impact of training ▪ Sponsor and support additional training events for stakeholders with particular focus on attorneys ad litem ▪ Identify training needs for judges and attorneys and develop and promote training and tools for trauma- informed care 	<p>Children's Commission partnered with Texas CASA on a project to survey child welfare stakeholders about the various types of trauma training and programs being offered and utilized around the state. Texas CASA developed and deployed the survey in Summer 2015. Results of the survey currently are being analyzed. The Children's Commission also continued to support DFPS's shift to a trauma-informed care system and devoted efforts to develop and promote judicial and attorney training about trauma- informed care, including a session on well-being at the Child Welfare Judges Conference held in August 2015. The Child Protection Law</p>	<p>\$0.00</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to focus on child well-being and permanency ▪ Include information about trauma informed care in the CPS Judicial Bench Book ▪ Liaise with and participate as a partner in the various trauma-informed workgroups and collaboratives ▪ Monitor the trauma informed care trainings, workgroups, meetings, strategies, timelines and provide reports to the Children's Commission and other stakeholders, as appropriate 	<p>Bench Book also includes a chapter on trauma. The 84th Legislature enacted SB125 to require DFPS to use a comprehensive assessment that includes a trauma screening within 45 days of a child entering conservatorship. DFPS is currently developing a Texas-specific Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) Assessment. The new CANS will be available in March 2016.</p>	
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2.2F Child Safety: Parental Child Safety Placements (PCSP).

2016 Action Steps:	Progress Report	FY2016 BUDGET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct Round Table (RT) discussion on Parental Child Safety Placements ▪ Issue PCSP Report with Recommendations ▪ Issue JIR Letter ▪ Identify additional training issues for judges and attorneys ▪ Develop helpful judicial and attorney resources and tools ▪ Work with legal aid providers or other child welfare partners to assist with appropriate closure of PCSPs ▪ Work with Texas Legislature, as appropriate 	<p>A RT on Parental Child Safety Placements was identified as needed and requested by DFPS in May 2015. On August 28, 2015, the Commission hosted a meeting to discuss the issue of PCSPs used when the Department initiates an investigation of a parent for abuse or neglect of a child and makes an initial determination that the child may not be safe with the parent, resulting in the child living with another caregiver. Usually, a PCSP ends with the child safely returning to live with the parent or the Department gaining formal legal custody. But in some cases, even after providing the parent services, the child cannot safely return home, the Department does not obtain legal custody, and the caregiver does not have legal custody either. The Dept has committed to working with stakeholders to identify avenues to ensure that children who are left in a PCSP from which the Department has exited are safe, that risk of harm to the child from the parent has been eliminated, and that legal custody is in place. The Children's Commission issued a JIR Letter on PCSPs on September 4, 2015. Link to the JIR on PCSPs here: http://texaschildrenscommission.gov/media/32438/PCSP%20JIR.pdf</p>	<p>\$0.00</p>

2.2G Child Fatalities: Protect Our Kids (POK) Commission.

2016 Action Steps	Progress Report	FY2016 BUDGET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to support POK Commission through December 31, 2015 ▪ Write POK Report, including recommendations related to preventing child fatalities due to abuse or neglect ▪ Participate in agency-run collaborative to guide state policy and practice ▪ Collaborate with 85th Texas Legislature on this matter, as appropriate 	<p>The POK Commission is a 12-person commission chaired by Judge Robin Sage. Established by Senate Bill 66 during the 83rd Legislative Session, the POK Commission is charged with identifying promising practices and strategies to address and reduce fatalities from child abuse and neglect, and recommending a comprehensive statewide strategy for reducing those fatalities. The POK Commission is working with members from the House Select Committee on Child Deaths, the State Child Fatality Review Team, the DFPS Office of Child Safety, and various stakeholder organizations. The Children's Commission is providing meeting and administrative support to Judge Sage and the POK. The POK Commission met several times in FY2015 and divided its</p>	<p>\$1000.00</p>

	work into four subcommittees: Data, Child Fatality Review Team Support, Prevention, and Sustainability. The POK Commission will submit a report to the Legislature by December 31, 2015.	
2.2H Permanency and Wellbeing: Additional specific activities intended to heighten awareness about child permanency and wellbeing.		
2016 Action Steps	Progress Report	FY2016 BUDGET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support efforts to roll out “New Culture of Permanency” at Regional Permanency Summits throughout all DFPS regions ▪ JIR to attend various permanency summits ▪ Include importance of permanency and new permanency culture philosophy and ideas at child welfare judicial conferences ▪ Host foster youth panel at CWJC ▪ Include new legislation in CPS Judicial Bench Book ▪ Design Bench Cards to include well-being and permanency best practices 	The Children’s Commission hosted Amelia Franck Meyer at the annual Child Welfare Judges Conference to train judges on the new Culture of Permanency work initiated by DFPS statewide. Both JIRs have been trained by Ms. Franck-Meyer. The CC sponsored / hosted a foster youth panel on well-being at the August judges’ conference, and the CPS Bench Book was updated with new legislation and information about well-being and transitioning youth. Bench cards were updated to include specific well-being and permanency best practice questions and issues	\$0.00
2.2I Human Trafficking: Participate on Statewide Human Trafficking (HT) Prevention Task Force and work with child welfare community on child welfare related issues such as identification, services, training, data collection, and collaboration.		
2016 Action Steps	Progress Report	FY2016 BUDGET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participate with Office of Attorney General and statewide HT Task Force ▪ Work with DFPS on identification and assessment of children from child welfare system who are victims or at risk of becoming victims of human trafficking ▪ Gain understanding of existing data collection efforts and identify additional or new data collection elements or efforts needed ▪ Coordinate and collaborate with child welfare agency and other child welfare partners on various programs and efforts to combat HT occurring a local or regional levels ▪ Understand, participate, and help identify HT placements and services available to foster children who are trafficked or at risk of being trafficked ▪ Identify training needs for judges, attorneys, and other stakeholders ▪ Collaborate on prevention efforts at state, regional and local levels as appropriate 	<p>New for FY 2016</p> <p>During the 84th Legislative Session, the Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force was extended for another two years, given new tasks to complete, and membership was expanded to include the Children’s Commission. The OAG is bringing together the Task Force on September 15, 2015, to introduce everyone to the new agencies and partners as well as discuss the new measures and share agency initiatives.</p>	\$1,000.00

2.4A Legal Representation Effort: Legal Representation Study (LRS) Workgroup – exists to explore various aspects of legal representation in Texas including due process, financial impact on the state and counties, policy and legislation that supports the representation system, outreach, education, training, standards of representation, timely and meaningful court hearings, and high quality legal advocacy.

2016 Action Steps:	Progress Report	FY2016 BUDGET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff and support the LRS workgroup by hosting / facilitating meetings, reimbursing travel expenses for workgroup members, developing agendas and preparing meeting materials, collecting attendee information and match ▪ Meet at least twice throughout 2015 and 2016 to discuss ▪ Develop and adopt statewide standards of representation ▪ Continue to develop and improve county relationships and local relationships ▪ Act as a resource for the Texas Legislature 	<p>In late 2014, the Legal Representation Workgroup examined: 1) feasibility of creating a statutory definition of indigence; 2) creating a limited duration attorney appointment for parent at time CPS suit is filed; and 3) whether the Commission should develop and promote the adoption of standards of representation. In late 2014, the workgroup voted to develop and adopt Standards, however, due to the 2015 legislative session, development of the standards will not be completed until FY2016. For FY2015, several legislative issues submitted to the Texas Judicial Council and Legislature including amendments to Family Code Sections 107.013 and 263.201 to establish guidelines for determining indigence and to clarify that parents are entitled to a court appointed attorney when they are indigent and appear in opposition to the state’s suit. Also, to add Section 107.0141 to give courts the option to appoint attorneys for a limited period to assist with locating the parents, establishing indigence, and preparing for the Adversary Hearing. Also, Texas Family Code Chapters 155 and 263 were amended to place tighter controls on the process used when child protection cases transfer from one county to another to help ensure state mandated deadlines and party appointments are not missed. Finally, Texas Family Code sections were added to provide for the creation and oversight of county or regional offices of child or parent representation in CPS cases. All bills were signed by the Governor and became effective September 1, 2015.</p>	<p>\$5,000.00</p>

2.4B Parent Representation Project: Current project (McLennan County) Involves the county contracting with private law firms for all legal representation of parents. The project goals include: 1) to fully understand the benefits and challenges of contracting with private law firms for the representation of parents in CPS proceedings; 2) to evaluate the nature and quality of representation provided by firm attorneys; and 3) to the extent possible, to compare the firm attorneys to the private bar to examine how quality and outcomes may differ.

2016 Action Steps:	Progress Report	FY2016 BUDGET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with McLennan County to develop a one-day training event for attorneys, CPS caseworkers, CASA volunteers, and other community stakeholders • Work with District Judge to refine contract to insert training requirements and standards of representation • Continue to survey and interview firm attorneys, CPS caseworkers, CASA volunteers, parents and other community 	<p>In July, 2014, the Children’s Commission began an evaluation project to: 1) identify strengths and weaknesses of the model; 2) make recommendations for improvements to the McLennan County model; and 3) assess the feasibility of replication in other cities and counties. The evaluation included interviews and file reviews as well as Indicators of Success for Family Representation, developed in partnership with the ABA, to evaluate the nature and quality of representation provided by firm attorneys in McLennan County. In summary, the McLennan County Parent</p>	<p>\$1000.00</p>

<p>stakeholders about the challenges and benefits associated with the project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempt a more in-depth parent survey to gather information from the parents' perspective on the quality of their representation • Additional court observation to gain a better understanding of court-specific procedures and culture, methods of advocacy, and how the parties relate to one another 	<p>Representation Project has improved the quality of representation for parents involved in CPS cases in McLennan County. While this model may be hard to replicate in larger counties, this model could be implemented by an individual judge. The project indicates that some type of pooling structure can reduce and even eliminate continuances and delays making time-certain docketing more feasible. It appears that contract rates, as opposed to hourly rates, can actually promote higher quality lawyering in the right context because of the self-selection process of the individuals who are willing to take lower pay to represent individuals in CPS cases. It also appears that this type of agreement works particularly well with larger groups of attorneys who can pool other costs and possibly bring in financial support from other sources. One county mediator observed that from 2012 – 2014, the difference in parent preparedness is stark. Parent attorneys are doing a much better job of helping parents understand the purpose of mediation and options available to them/their family. Parents interviewed responded positively to all questions regarding satisfaction, except as to whether the parent had regular contact on days other than court days. For FY2016, the Children's Commission will work with Judge Gary Coley to bring a live training event to McLennan County for attorneys who appear on the CPS docket. Also, McLennan County has been added to the group of Child Protection Courts so the CPS docket will transition to an associate judge and data will migrate to the child protection case management system or CPCMS that is maintained by Office of Court Administration.</p>	
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2.4D Mediation in Child Protection Cases.

2016 Action Steps:	Progress Report	FY2016 BUDGET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ UT will study the best practices and cost-effectiveness of mediation for Travis County and will develop a cost formula that can be applied to other counties in Texas ▪ The Children's Commission will use the research framework and questions developed in this project with other Texas counties ▪ The project will aim to answer four broad research questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What types of child protection cases are best suited for resolution through mediation? - When in the life-cycle of a case is the optimal time for mediation to occur? - How are outcomes affected by mediation, including the legal resolution of the case, child wellbeing, and time to permanency? 	<p>In September 2014, UT applied for a grant to help determine the best practices and cost-effectiveness of mediation for Travis County, Texas. This project also aimed to develop cost formula that could be applied to other counties in the state and to provide a research framework and questions that can be used by other counties. One goal of the project was to determine the costs of mediation measured by the full costs associated with cases that are resolved prior to mediation, at mediation, and at trial and include all real costs paid by the courts and departments to prepare and service the case, in addition to the cost of mediation, foster care placement, and any other relevant costs. Due to data delays associated with the SACWIS / child welfare system, the project has been delayed and will be processed at year end as a no-cost extension so the project may be completed in FY2016. The result will be an evidence-based analysis best practices in mediation and whether mediation in child protection cases is a more cost effective strategy than going to trial without mediation, and whether mediation can be associated with a shorter time to permanency and case resolution.</p>	<p>No Cost Extension \$2,776.00</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is mediation a cost-effective strategy for resolving child protection cases? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Legal resolution will be measured by determining whether all of the legal issues were resolved by mediation, as compared to being partially resolved or not resolved (moving to trial). o The timing and type of outcome of the case will be measured in three ways: time to legal resolution or final order (whatever the outcome), the type of final order (reunification, adoption, PMC to the Department or relative), and time to exit from foster care. Comparisons between cases that are resolved prior to mediation, at mediation, and at trial will be made. o Cost of the case will be measured by the full costs associated with cases that are resolved prior to mediation, at mediation, and at trial. ▪ UT will publish a final report in FY2016 ▪ Based on report, the Children’s Commission will determine whether to fund additional mediation projects to help develop best practices or training 		
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2.5A Children’s Commission Round Tables: Round Tables (RT) bring together subject matter experts, judicial and executive branch leaders, and key policymakers to discuss issues affecting child welfare in the State of Texas.

2016 Action Steps:	Progress Report	FY2016 BUDGET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with DFPS to identify RT topics ▪ Form a workgroup to define state purpose and goal of RT, determine format, and develop an agenda ▪ Facilitate and staff workgroup meetings to develop materials, data required, and identify speakers and moderators ▪ Secure meeting location, invitations, attendee lists, travel, and match forms ▪ Produce written report from the RT within 4 to 6 months and disseminate to participants and stakeholders 	<p>Please see the Parental Child Safety Placement project (2.2F) for RT details. For 2016, the Children’s Commission will work with DFPS and other child welfare partners to identify RT topics.</p>	<p>\$5,000.00</p>

2.5B Jurist in Residence: Jurist in Residence acts as a consultant, trainer, and speaker to provide expert and seasoned judicial advice on matters affecting courts and legal system handling of child welfare cases and issues.

2016 Action Steps:	Progress Report	FY2016 BUDGET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partner with retired, experienced judges with child welfare experience to serve as JIRs ▪ Attend conference calls, meetings, and conferences as requested / needed ▪ Publish communiqués and letters on emerging, highly pertinent, and changing policy, laws, and practice that may be of interest to judges hearing CPS cases ▪ JIRs will market scholarship and conference attendance opportunities ▪ Assist with writing JIR letters, distribute to the CPS judge listserv, and post JIR letters on the CC website ▪ Provide shorter communications with judges regarding specific training opportunities and other matters of interest 	<p>The Jurist in Residence (JIR) position was created to foster judicial leadership and promote greater expertise among child protection judges. The JIR acts as a consultant, trainer, and speaker to provide expert and seasoned judicial advice on matters affecting courts and legal system handling of child welfare cases and issues. Additionally, informational letter and “blasts” concerning items of interests, such as training events, are routinely issued. In FY2015, the JIR published newsletters or news blasts on the following topics: 1) April Trial Skills Training Application: Deadline Extended; 2) 2015 Judicial Conferences; 3) May is National Foster Care Month; 4) 2015 Attorney Scholarships; and 5) Reminder: 2015 Attorney Scholarships; 6) Information on Youth Sex Offenders; 7) DFPS Transformation; 8) Legislative Update from the 84th Legislative Session; and 9) Parental Child Safety Placements.</p> <p>Additionally, the JIRs assisted with development of curriculum for the annual Child Welfare Judges Conference, reviewed updates of the Child Protection Law Bench Book, provided technical assistance during the 84th Legislative Session, and collaborated on a well-being initiative.</p>	\$40,000.00
2.5C Assistance to Local Jurisdictions.		
2016 Action Steps:	Progress Report	FY2016 BUDGET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work to assist local communities and jurisdictions in providing training, collaborative events, and leadership forums to help improve local child welfare systems 	New for FY2016	0.00 May involve staff travel, which is included in operating budget
2.5D Speaker and Consultant Support.		
2016 Action Steps:	Progress Report	FY2016 BUDGET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engage with consultants and experts, as needed to help further Children’s Commission goals, including but not limited to, strategic planning, training, and resource or material development, publication, and distribution 	New for FY2016	\$5,000.00
2.5E Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Stakeholder Input: The federal CFSR for Texas is scheduled for 2016. Part of the process includes a statewide assessment conducted by the child welfare agency and child welfare stakeholders.		
2016 Action Steps:	Progress Report	FY2016 BUDGET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participate in the 2016 CFSR onsite review ▪ Participate in developing any Program Improvement Plan 	The federal CFSR is scheduled for June 2016. In FY2015, the Children’s Commission facilitated three stakeholder meetings on November 14, 2014, December 19, 2014, and January 23, 2015. Each meeting was attended by approximately 50 stakeholders representing the judiciary, child placing	\$1,000.00

	<p>agencies, child advocacy groups, DFPS management, licensing, contracts, and administration, as well as personnel from the Administration of Children and Families. CFSR Stakeholder Group 1 - Case Review System; CFSR Stakeholder Group 2 - the Service Array and Agency Response to Community; and CFSR Stakeholder Group 3 – the Foster/Adoption Licensing, Recruitment and Retention, to include Foster and Adoptive Family Training. The Department included an analysis in its Child and Family State Plan and submitted to ACF in June 2015.</p>	
TOTAL BASIC PROJECTS		\$103,376.00

TRAINING COMMITTEE REPORT

2.1A Texas Center for the Judiciary (TCJ): Provides specialized judicial education and training opportunities for active, retired and former Texas appellate, district and county court at law judges, as well as associate judges and court personnel. The Texas Center is designated by the Court of Criminal Appeals as the official registrar of continuing judicial education.

2016 Action Steps:	Progress Report	FY2016 BUDGET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partner with TCJ to design curriculum and agenda for 2016 Child Welfare Judges Conference ▪ Conduct periodic planning calls, including creation of workgroup to plan agenda ▪ Determine number of attendees TCJ/budget can accommodate ▪ Determine attendee criteria ▪ Coordinate with OCA about inclusion of CPC staff ▪ Identify whether meeting space needed for CPC judges and court coordinators ▪ Develop method of handling travel reimbursements ▪ Identify topics and speakers ▪ Develop agenda ▪ Monitor logistical and other planning information ▪ Meet in person 4-6 weeks in advance of event to discuss organizational responsibilities and duties ▪ Approve attendee list ▪ Survey participants for increases in knowledge and other feedback ▪ Evaluate conference planning process ▪ Evaluate participant feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incorporate feedback into FY2017 planning, as appropriate 	<p>The 2015 conference was held on August 17-19, 2015 and was attended by 90 judges. Topics included: Creating a Culture of Permanency, Judges' Strategies for Getting Kids to Permanency, Presentation by Texas CASA, 84th Legislative Session Update, Handling Wellbeing Issue from the Bench, Reasonable Efforts in CPS Cases, Tips for Properly Filing and Responding to Interventions in CPS Cases, Panel presentation by DFPS executives, NCSC Weighted Caseload Information Session and Study, Protect our Kids: Texas Efforts to Reduce Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities, Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, and Human Trafficking. The State Tribal Collaborative also hosted a ½ day session on Monday, August 17th, and six tribal peacemakers attended the judicial conference on August 18 and 19. Also, the Child Protection specialty courts held a ½ day meeting immediately prior to the conference and utilized the time to discuss technology that will support their work and best practices.</p>	<p>\$235,834.00</p> <p>Includes two Texas judicial conferences, scholarships to one national conference, judicial technical assistance, and TCJ overhead to organize and host conferences</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partner with TCJ to offer scholarships to the 2016 NCJFCJ Annual Conference ▪ Provide input into criteria for scholarships and determines number of scholarships to be awarded ▪ Approve scholarship process and list of scholarship recipients prior to notification ▪ Evaluate TCJ's scholarship process for the NCJFCJ conference ▪ Evaluate participant feedback ▪ Incorporate feedback about the planning process, participant experience, and participant opinion about the training into the FY2017 planning, as appropriate 	<p>The Annual NCJFCJ Conference was held in Austin on July 26-29, 2015. The Children's Commission, through its grant to TCJ, provided scholarships to 30 Texas judges. Also, Judge Darlene Byrne was installed as the NCJFCJ President for the 2015-2016 term.</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide partial funding for TCJ’s annual Family Justice Conference ▪ Provide input into the content of the child abuse and neglect presentation, track, or agenda ▪ Provide feedback regarding judges invited to and slated to attend the child abuse and neglect portion of the conference, including criteria for attending presentation or track ▪ Evaluate feedback solicited by TCJ about the child abuse and neglect portion or event ▪ Conducts CQI on the planning process, event content, and relevant speakers 	<p>The 2015 Family Justice Conference was held in San Antonio in January 2015 and CIP funds were used for a ½ day child abuse and neglect track. The sessions on the child abuse and neglect track at the Family Justice Conference included Reasonable Efforts, DFPS Commissioner Presentation, and Domestic Violence and Child Welfare Task Force. The three sessions were attended by between 30-50 judges; approximately 200 general jurisdiction judges attended the entire conference.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide funds for judicial technical assistance, which may be used for speakers, meeting support and facilitation. 	<p>FY 2015 CIP funds were used to fund speakers and facilitators at several multidisciplinary or judicial events such as the CFSR meetings hosted in November, December and January 2015 (see Basic Committee Report item 2.5E) and PCSP Round Table held on August 28, 2015 (see Basic Committee Report item 2.2F)</p>	
<p>2.1B Texas Child Protection Law Bench Book: The Bench Book was created in 2010 and has been updated with legislative changes as recently as the 2015 Session. It is available online through the Children’s Commission, Texas Center for the Judiciary, and Office of Court Administration websites.</p>		
<p>2016 Action Steps:</p>	<p>Progress Report</p>	<p>FY2016 BUDGET</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain a Child Protection Law Bench Book that outlines the statutory requirements for judges handling child protection cases, including topical sections, and checklists ▪ Disseminate Bench Book with 2016 updates at annual child welfare judicial conference, as well as to all new judges hearing CPS cases, and upon request ▪ Maintain an updated Bench Book on the Children’s Commission’s website ▪ Ensure all statutory citations are maintained and connected to a statutory resource hosted by LawBox ▪ Update the Bench Book with new information as needed ▪ Track distribution of Bench Book 	<p>Bench Book updated with 2015 legislative changes in August 2015 and distribution of 100 copies occurred at the August 2015 Child Welfare Judges Conference. Also, Bench Cards were modified based on judicial feedback and distributed to judges at 2015 Conference. The Bench Book will be posted online on the Children’s Commission website and connected to LawBox (web citation service) in September 2015.</p>	<p>\$10,000.00</p> <p>Includes 3600.00 LawBox, 6400.00 for printing and in-person meeting support</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Convene the Bench Book workgroup at least once in FY2016 in person or via conference call to review substantive changes and approve updates 		
<p>2.1C Trial Skills Training (TST): A hands-on training designed to improve the litigation skills of child welfare law attorneys in order to raise the caliber of legal services to children and families in child protection cases; includes fictional CPS fact pattern, with case file covering all statutory hearings building up to final trial; gives parent, child, and state attorneys litigation exercises in the CPS context; includes lectures and demonstrations from trained faculty comprised of senior attorneys and judges, followed by personal coaching; and is based on a Texas-specific case scenario with adapted pleadings and forms created for a termination lawsuit.</p>		

2016 Action Steps:	Progress Report	FY2016 BUDGET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Convene two, 3-day TST events that include lectures, demonstrations, and practice sessions with live witnesses. ▪ Follow same flow as a final trial in a CPS case ▪ Include hands-on practice of trial skills with the assistance of professional, live witnesses, videography, and coaching by trained faculty ▪ Allow attorney review of practice session with a faculty member for additional feedback ▪ Evaluate each TST event ▪ Edit and update TST curriculum and materials, as necessary 	<p>TST events held in October 2014 and April 2015, training 42 Texas attorneys from geographically diverse population. Extensive CQI conducted after each TST event and changes incorporated into the next TST session. In FY2015, four new TST faculty members were trained and the Children’s Justice Act agreed to cover the cost of participants who represent the state in CPS proceedings. In September, the Children’s Commission distributed an announcement about the November 2015 TST to its JIR listserv.</p>	<p>\$55,000.00</p> <p>Includes all expenses associated with TST</p> <p>\$26,250.00 Designated for faculty scholarships</p>
<p>2.1D Scholarships: Children’s Commission offers speaker fees, exam waiver fees, and training scholarships for 2 – 3 attorney trainings each year.</p>		
2016 Action Steps:	Progress Report	FY2016 BUDGET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide scholarships to State Bar of Texas Advanced Family Law One-Day Child Abuse and Neglect Track Workshop, National Association of Counsel for Children Annual Conference and every-other year, the American Bar Association Conference on Parent and Child Representation ▪ Determine which conferences scholarships will be awarded in FY2016, criteria for award, and amount of scholarship ▪ Create application process, evaluate each scholarship event and process and make changes, as appropriate ▪ Award scholarships pursuant to defined processed, and collect evaluation data from attendees, as appropriate ▪ Amend scholarship process, as necessary, and make recommendations regarding the 2017 funding 	<p>The Children’s Commission designed and administered the scholarship process for three CLEs: (1) For the State Bar of Texas (SBOT) Child Abuse and Neglect 1-Day Workshop in San Antonio, Texas, on August 5th, 2015. 98 registration scholarships were awarded, and 69 attorneys attended the live CLE in San Antonio (almost evenly allocated between DFPS attorneys and court-appointed attorneys for children and parents), and 19 will watch via video replay in October. Preliminary post-event survey responses show that 75% of these awardees would not have attended the CLE without a scholarship. Also, presentations on domestic violence in CPS cases, case law update, and a cross-examination of a live expert witness were all well received. (2) The bi-annual ABA Conference held in Washington DC on July 22-23rd on Children and the Law was attended by 5 Texas awardees, while the ABA Conference for Parent Attorneys on July 24-25th was attended by 6 awardees. All awardees to the ABA conferences received support from their presiding or appointing judge to be selected to attend and to receive up to \$1250 in reimbursement funds. All 11 awardees responded to the post-event survey that attending the ABA conference would not have been possible without financial assistance from the Children’s Commission. (3) The NACC Annual Conference on August 24-27th in Monterey, CA was attended by 8 Texas Child Welfare Law Specialists on registration scholarships. Preliminary post-event survey results show that all attendees have a current practice which they plan to change and/or a new practice which they plan to implement as a result of knowledge gained at the NACC Conference. Additional survey results will be provided in the February 2016 commission report.</p>	<p>\$10,000.00 Advanced Family Law One-Day Child Abuse / Neglect Track</p> <p>\$10,000.00 Annual NACC Conference</p>

2.1E CASA will continue to work on assessing trauma knowledge and services among the child welfare community and help provide trauma-related training to attorneys ad litem. CASA will offer scholarships to attend the Annual CASA meeting in FY2016.

2016 Action Steps:	Progress Report	FY2016 BUDGET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Distribute the 2015 Workforce Survey on Trauma-Informed Care within the Child Welfare System in Texas report through in-person and stakeholder meetings ▪ Work with the Children’s Commission to develop quality training opportunities for attorneys ad litem to promote trauma-informed care knowledge and approaches to representing children and parents in child protection cases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This will be accomplished by conducting at least two meetings with local CASA programs and Attorney ad Litem stakeholder groups to discuss need and best practice ideas around trauma-informed care training and practices and identify best training practices in the CASA network and in attorney training opportunities. ▪ Draft at least one policy change priority, based on the data from the survey, aimed at improving trauma-informed care training and practices in the Texas child welfare system ▪ Meet and collaboratively work with DFPS regarding the agency’s existing trauma-informed care training practices and offer recommendations, based on the Trauma Survey, for expanding their current curriculum to integrate information about trauma and its impact on children ▪ Provide a 3-hour institute at the 2016 Texas CASA Annual Conference on trauma-informed care and lessons learned ▪ Register and provide for travel expenses for up to 10 Attorneys ad Litem to attend the 2016 Texas CASA conference 	<p>CASA’s FY2015 training projects increased the understanding of the impact of trauma to help CASA volunteers, CPS caseworkers, attorneys, judges, placement providers, therapeutic providers, kinship and families implement strategies that positively impact well-being and permanency outcomes. Texas CASA developed a survey to assess trauma informed training, practice, use and effectiveness. Read more about the CASA Trauma Survey under Basic Committee item 2.2E.</p>	<p>\$29,358.00</p>

2.1F State Bar of Texas Online Training: SBOT makes the online training available for free or low cost to parent, child and state legal representatives who take CPS appointments.

2016 Action Steps:	Progress Report	FY2016 BUDGET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with State Bar of Texas to add 2-4 topics to the online CPS Identify topics and advise on content ▪ Identify speakers and arrange dates for filming with SBOT ▪ Publicize CLE on website and through other methods such as JIR letter, announcements at Commission meetings and other events 	<p>In partnership with the State Bar, the following online courses were made available to court-appointed attorneys and state and DFPS attorneys: 1) Advocating for Youth Aging Out of Foster Care; 2) Resources and Processes for Representing Crossover Youth with Disabilities; 3) Special Education Advocacy for Kids in the Foster Care System; 4) Representing Teen Parents in CPS Cases; 5) Practice Tips on Representing Children; 6) Representing Parents in CPS Cases;</p>	<p>\$2,500.00</p> <p>Includes SBOT online training taped during the one-day per</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide scholarships based on financial need to attorneys in order to access the SBOT online CPS library 	<p>7) Preserving Error and Appeals Issues in CPS cases; 8) Representing Children in CPS Cases, Updated July 2013; 9) Trial Skills in the CPS Case; 10) Moving from Ordinary to Extraordinary Representation in CPS Cases; 11) Child Protection Legislative Update: 84th Legislative Session; and 12) Thinking Ahead: Dealing with Appeals Issues in CPS Cases. The SBOT’s online library of CPS-related webinars is available for \$25.00 per webinar. There are scholarships available through the Commission and through the Bar for attorneys who need financial assistance to access this online training.</p>	<p>year event, and all costs associated with Commission-produced webinars (next item)</p>
<p>2.1G Children’s Commission sponsored and hosted webinars for attorneys ad litem, judges, stakeholders.</p>		
<p>2016 Action Steps:</p>	<p>Progress Report</p>	<p>FY2016 BUDGET</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sponsor and host a series of webinars on various topics relevant to child welfare ▪ Ensure training is made available to all attorneys ad litem, parent attorneys, and attorneys representing the State of Texas, as well as judges and stakeholders ▪ Advise on content ▪ Seek Continuing Legal Education credit for each webinar ▪ Post a link to the webinar on website ▪ Notify potential viewers via electronic means ▪ Monitor the number of viewers ▪ Survey for quality of process, content and speakers/presentations ▪ CQI the process and the content 	<p>New for 2016</p>	<p>Included in above item</p>
<p>2.1H Children’s Commission Provides Reimbursement for CWLS Exam Fee and CWLS Recertification for Successful Child Welfare Law Specialists.</p>		
<p>2016 Action Steps:</p>	<p>Progress Report</p>	<p>FY2016 BUDGET</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide NACC Child Welfare Law Specialization Exam Fee Waivers for attorneys who become certified as CWLS ▪ Provides partial reimbursement for CWLS who are successfully recertified by NACC 	<p>The Children’s Commission offers reimbursement of the Certification Exam Fee for Texas attorneys and judges who successfully qualify for and pass the Child Welfare Specialist Exam. The cost of the fee to take the Child Welfare Certification Exam is \$350 per attorney. Additionally, assistance is available to Texas attorneys and judges who are seeking re-certification of their CWLS every five years, which is reimbursed at \$190. Currently, there are 35 Texas CWLS and 28 current Texas applicants who are in the process of preparing for the Certification exam.</p>	<p>\$5,000.00</p>
<p>2.1I Regional Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) Attorney Training.</p>		
<p>2016 Action Steps:</p>	<p>Progress Report</p>	<p>FY2016 BUDGET</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide support for speaker fees, facility fees and other expenses related to the annual Department of Family and Protective Services Regional Attorney Training 	<p>DFPS held a regional attorney training event in October 2014 for approximately 100 attorneys and staff who provide legal representation to the State of Texas in approximately half the counties in the state.</p>	<p>\$5,000.00</p>

2.1J Local Attorney Ad Litem Training: Keeping Infants and Toddlers Safe (KITS) Conference held in Houston each year.		
2016 Action Steps:	Progress Report	FY2016 BUDGET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide support for Keeping Infants and Toddlers Safe conference held in Houston each year ▪ Provide notice of conference to judges and attorneys ▪ Seek results of evaluations from organizers ▪ Conduct CQI of process and training content 	KITS Conference was held on June 11-12, 2015 and was a multi-track training for attorneys representing children, parents, and DFPS, and child welfare professionals. Results of the conference evaluation are pending.	\$15,000.00
2.4C Texas Board of Legal Specialization (TBLS): The goal of the project is to establish a child welfare specialization in with the Texas Board of Legal Specialization to help improve the quality of legal representation in child protection hearings.		
2016 Action Steps:	Progress Report	FY2016 BUDGET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide staff support to the TBLS Advisory Committee for FY2016 ▪ Participate on the Advisory Committee ▪ Assist with the following tasks: writing standards or qualifications for attorney eligibility, writing the specialization exam, evaluating applications, and providing additional assistance to the Texas Board of Legal Specialization, as requested ▪ Participate in keeping all child welfare partners informed of progress 	The Children’s Commission submitted a full application for legal specialization in child welfare law to the Texas Board of Legal Specialization (TBLS) on Friday April 24, 2015. The application included the names of over 20 attorneys and judges who will serve as the TBLS Advisory Committee to oversee the development of testing standards and to assist in writing the exam. The application is under consideration by the TBLS board, and if approved, TBLS will publish the proposed standards for comment in September 2015. The TBLS Advisory Committee will meet on September 11, 2015 to finalize the Standards for Certification, which will then be published for comment by the TBLS for 30-60 days, after which, the TBLS Advisory Committee will start writing the exam.	\$5,000.00
TOTAL TRAINING PROJECTS		\$408,942.00

DATA/TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE REPORT

2.3A Notice and Engagement Tool: The project involves using non-confidential case data to provide email notice to users about upcoming hearings. OCA will continue to expand the use, maintain, and enhance as appropriate.

2016 Action Steps:	2015 Progress Update	FY2016 BUDGET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ OCA will maintain the web tool that allows establishing a user ID, searching for a child / case, and setting timely email alerts ▪ Children’s Commission will periodically re-issue announcement to various audiences ▪ Children’s Commission will develop a survey tool to assess the usefulness, effectiveness and accuracy of the system ▪ System login and search information will be monitored ▪ Notices will be examined to evaluate whether the correct hearing data is populating according to search criteria ▪ OCA will report to the Children’s Commission the number of users and hearings included in alerts sent by the system 	<p>The project involves using non-confidential case data to provide notice to parties and interested persons about upcoming hearings, and is distributed via email. As of August 31, 2015, there were 228 users. Between October 1, 2014 and August 31, 2015, the system generated 391 notifications related to 366 different hearings. Also, in August, the Children’s Commission staff made a presentation to all CPC judges and coordinators to update on the availability and encourage use of the product.</p>	<p align="center">\$324,467.00</p>

2.3B Videoconferencing: The video conferencing project enables children involved in child abuse and neglect cases to participate in permanency and placement review hearings without them being physically present in the courtroom.

2016 Action Steps:	2015 Progress Update	FY2016 BUDGET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ OCA will host and support the hardware and software required to facilitate VTC between courts and residential placements ▪ OCA will continue to refine the procedures and protocol between OCA, DFPS, Courts, and other users ▪ OCA will maintain an updated set of instructions for participation and provide to end-users ▪ OCA will continue to maintain a list of Residential Treatment Centers, Courts, and non-court and non-DFPS contracted ▪ OCA will continue to work with DFPS and other entities on expanding capability and feasibility for use beyond court hearings ▪ Continue scheduling and coordinating remote hearings for existing remote users including test calls ▪ Increase the number of participating courts by five (5), increase the number participating DFPS service provider sites by 8 during the fiscal year. ▪ Conduct an outreach to specific local CASA program offices that are interested in 	<p>The video conferencing project enables children involved in child abuse and neglect cases to participate in permanency and placement review hearings without them being physically present in the courtroom. OCA hosts and supports the hardware and software required to facilitate video conferencing between courts and residential placements. OCA maintains a list of Residential Treatment Centers with video conferencing capability as well as a list of courts. OCA maintains a log of all hearings conducted, including the date, time, participating court, type of hearing, participating placement, length of hearing, any problems with the transmission quality, or technical difficulties. For the period of 09/01/14 through 8/31/15, there were 289 videoconference hearings held. During that same period, 216 youth attended a hearing via videoconference. Also, there are 26 courts, and 69 service provider facilities utilizing videoconferencing. OCA added a total of six facilities for FY2015. The system is also used to allow children to see their parents and siblings at the hearing, and allows attorneys and GALs to meet or confer with their clients prior to hearings. Also there are three local CASA programs are set up to use videoconferencing, plus capacity to add more CASA programs.</p>	<p align="center">Included above</p>

<p>participating in the video conferencing project. Video conferencing capability will be implemented where possible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Acquire new video conferencing infrastructure. The new video conferencing infrastructure will provide the capability to conduct video conferencing from mobile technology devices (smartphone and tablets) on android and iOS ▪ Maintain a log of all hearings conducted, including the date, time participating court, type of hearing, participating placement, and length of hearing, any problems with the transmission quality or technological barriers. 	<p>OCA plans to upgrade the hardware in FY2016 to improve the reporting capability and to include features to enable use from any hand-held device such as an iPad, iPhone, or Android.</p>	
<p>2.3C Website / Support: Children’s Commission will maintain a website for the Commission and for Education efforts to inform and apprise stakeholders about the Commission and the offerings and services available from the Children’s Commission and Texas Court Improvement Program.</p>		
<p>2016 Action Steps:</p>	<p>Progress Report</p>	<p>FY2016 BUDGET</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ OCA will update the Children’s Commission website by September 18, 2015 ▪ Children’s Commission Staff will monitor website on an ongoing basis to ensure items are added, deleted, and information is maintained in a current and accurate manner 	<p>The Children’s Commission will transition to a new website at the end of the FY2015. Link: http://texaschildrenscommission.gov/</p>	<p>Included above</p>
<p>2.3D Child Protection Case Management System (CPCMS): CPCMS is a case management system that is unique to Child Protection Courts. Efficient and full use of the case management system can help decrease the time to permanency and CPC Courts.</p>		
<p>2016 Action Steps:</p>	<p>Progress Report</p>	<p>FY2016 BUDGET</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ OCA will provide project management, programming and testing services for CPCMS. ▪ OCA will determine whether there are bug fixes or enhancements required based on input from CPCMS users. ▪ OCA will use its CPCMS Advisory Group to determine the nature and priority of CPCMS enhances and bug fixes. ▪ CC Staff will participate in the Advisory Group calls and meetings. ▪ OCA will consult with the Children’s Commission on the appropriate percentage of time to allocate to CPCMS enhancements. ▪ OCA will keep Children’s Commission apprised of equipment and software purchases required for proper and efficient operation and maintenance. 	<p>CPCMS is a case management system that is unique to Child Protection Courts. It has been in use since 2009. OCA provides project management, programming and testing services for CPCMS. OCA staffs a CPCMS Advisory Council of CPC judges, OCA staff and Children’s Commission staff to evaluate bug fixes or enhancements. The CPCMS Advisory Group met in FY2015 to provide governance in order to prioritize enhancements and bug fixes. Also in FY2015, OCA undertook a major upgrade of the CPCMS infrastructure and also upgraded the judge’s primary hearing page, which allows the judge more flexibility to stay on one page (the primary page) of CPCMS while also accessing information stored on other pages. Overall, these changes have made CPCMS more efficient and easier for judges and court coordinators to use. CPCMS is in maintenance mode. OCA continually works on the architecture to streamline how documents are stored so that document storage can be accomplished outside the CPCMS database. Documents stored outside the database will make the system more responsive and easier to use, and as four new CPC courts will be created in FY 2016, , this</p>	<p>Included above</p>

	<p>change will allow CPCMS to continue to be responsive as users are added.</p> <p>Another project with CPCMS going forward into FY2016 will involve using data from the State Bar of Texas database to eliminate duplicate entries for attorneys by identifying each attorney by his/her bar number and the name associated with that bar number on the SBOT website.</p>	
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2.3E Weighted Caseload Study: To identify the specific and accurate court and judicial system resources required to adequately handle the state's child protection caseload.

2016 Action Steps:	Progress Report	FY2016 BUDGET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ OCA will work with the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) to design a weighted caseload project ▪ A Judicial Needs Assessment Committee (JNAC) will be formed to provide project oversight and guidance as well as to review project plans and materials ▪ A web-based tool will be developed to for judges to collect data ▪ Training will be developed to explain to judicial officers how to classify and record work during the study ▪ An event-based time study of judicial workload over the course of a four to six week period will be conducted in October/November 2015 ▪ The activities will include all on-bench and off-bench pre-trial, dispositional, and post-disposition activities ▪ An analysis of the time study date will be performed ▪ A composite case weight for CPS cases will be developed ▪ The project will also include a sufficient of time survey to assess whether judges would have sufficient time to fulfill all responsibilities given current resource levels ▪ This particular study will assess whether there is a need for more or less time related to specific phases of case processing, the challenges to effective handling, and proven efficient and deficient case processes and strategies ▪ A final meeting will convene for presentation of the results and sufficiency of time survey ▪ A final report that includes CPS case weight recommendations will be published by NCSC and OCA 	<p>Late FY2015, the Children's Commission approved a grant to the National Center for State Courts to design and execute a weighted caseload study. NCSC is responsible for creating the tool to collect data, train judges on how to track and record their work, and provide a glossary to define all case-type events. In June, the NCSC and OCA formed a Judicial Needs Assessment Committee to provide input and oversight for the project, and the JNAC met on July 7, 2015, to discuss court-related and child welfare statistics, the types of hearings judges oversee, case administration duties such as docketing, data into CPCMS for those judges who use that system, travel as it relates to CPC judges, and other administrative tasks related to case management. In August, the NCSC and OCA developed a Glossary to define each hearing and case event, and created a category type for each hearing type and case event. Also, in August, the NCSC made a presentation at the Annual Child Welfare Conference and recruited judicial participants for the caseload study. The time study dates are October 26 - November 22. Twenty-eight judges will participate (19 non-CPC courts, 9 from CPC courts). NCSC will train each participant judge, and the time-study will occur over a four-to-six week period in October and November 2015. The Children's Commission is represented on the JNAC and also assists OCA in providing meeting and travel support for the JNAC members.</p>	<p>\$73,223.00 For NCSC activities, assistance</p> <p>\$6220.00 For JNAC travel expense</p>
TOTAL DATA/TECH PROJECTS		\$403,910.00

FOSTER CARE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT

2.2B Texas Blueprint: Foster Care and Education Committee will support and monitor implementation of the Blueprint recommendations.

2016 Action Steps:	Progress Report	FY2016 BUDGET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff new standing Foster Care and Education Committee to launch Phase II of the Texas Blueprint Implementation ▪ Ensure the committee meets periodically to assess progress of implementation ▪ Promote continued collaboration between education, child welfare, and the courts ▪ Seek guidance of top-level judicial, education, and child welfare leadership, as necessary ▪ Create and monitor workgroups or subcommittees to carry out charge or purpose of the Foster Care and Education Committee ▪ Foster Care and Education Committee will provide periodic updates on implementation to the Children's Commission at its scheduled meetings during FY2016 ▪ CC staff will include information about education needs, outcomes, laws, policy, practice, and judicial tools in its CPS Judicial Bench Book and Education website 	<p>Phase I wrapped up in December 2014 with the Children’s Commission forming a standing Foster Care and Education Committee to oversee the continued implementation of the Texas Blueprint recommendations to improve education outcomes for children and youth in foster care.. Phase II of implementation began with the first meeting of the Foster Care and Education Committee on July 20, 2015. The committee approved the creation of four workgroups to meet periodically. The workgroups will address data, post-secondary opportunities, special education, and local collaboration. The Data Workgroup will work towards improved information-sharing and the formulation of a joint report by TEA and DFPS. The Postsecondary Workgroup will address issues of college or career readiness, identification of students currently or formerly in care, and supports to encourage better outcomes beyond high school. The Special Education Workgroup will focus on the over and underrepresentation of students in foster care in special education. The Local Collaboration Workgroup will identify strategies to promote collaboration at the local level. The next Foster Care and Education Committee meeting is on December 14, 2015. The CPS Bench Book chapter on education issues was updated in August, including addition of legislative changes.</p>	<p align="right">\$10,000.00</p>
<p>TOTAL FC&E PROJECTS</p>		<p align="right">\$10,000.00</p>
<p>GRAND TOTAL PROJECTS</p>		<p align="right">\$926,228.00</p>