



# Children's Commission.

## *For the State of Texas and Texas Child Welfare System*

Children's Commission serves as the critical connection between Child Protective Services and the judiciary. No child enters or leaves foster care without a court order.

For the 30,000 children in the care of the state, a judge will:

- decide where the child will live, with whom, and for how long;
- decide whether the child will be allowed to see siblings and other family members, how often, and under what circumstances;
- decide whether a child's relationship with his or her parents will be terminated forever.

## *In 2015-2016*

- 1380 judges, attorneys, stakeholders trained with CIP \$\$
- 6,364 volunteer hours leveraged by Children's Commission projects. Equal to **3+ additional full-time employees** working to improve State of Texas child welfare system
- Staffed 27 committees and workgroups
- 263 meeting hours

## *Last five years:*

- Over **\$1.5M** on judicial training
- Over **\$1M** on attorney training
- Over **\$1M** in video conferencing services and hosted over **1,267 video conference hearings** enabling youth placed in RTCs to participate in vital permanency review hearings affecting their lives and outcomes
- Over **6600 aging out guides** provided to foster youth leaving the foster care system
- **140** attorneys trained in trial skills, including 45 DFPS attorneys
- Over **500** judges have received Texas specific child welfare training

## *Additional examples of work:*

- Funded development of unified court case management system for CPS cases that can produce data on court practices and child and family outcomes

- Led statutory, policy and practice reform to improve education outcomes for youth in foster care
- Assisted judicial, legislative, and child welfare to understand the trauma associated with child abuse, neglect, and human trafficking
- Established board certification in child welfare / improve legal representation for all parties, including DFPS
- Advised legislative staff on technical issues and judicial perspective of bills
- Secured weighted caseload study to help Office of Court Administration determine the need for courts

*Critical this session:*

If the legislature passes SB11/HB914, intended to spread foster care redesign and privatize much of foster care, its success will depend on, in large part, judges being apprised of its passage, and how the changes at DFPS will affect what happens in the court room.

- *Without this knowledge and concomitant education and training for judges and lawyers, cases could very likely stall and **permanency for children will be delayed.***
- The Children's Commission will ensure judicial awareness and readiness across the state if and when foster care redesign and privatization roll out.
- The Children's Commission can also help DFPS work locally with community-based care providers and the judiciary to ensure a smoother transition that does not disrupt services to children and families and stability for the rollout.

