

Strategic Plan/Annual Program Assessment and Reporting Template

State Name: TEXAS

Annual Program Assessment Report Submitted: December 31, 2012

Overall Goal/Mission of CIP: To strengthen courts for children, youth and families in the Texas child-protection system and thereby improve the safety, permanency, and well-being of children.

Summary of FY2012 Activities

In addition to overseeing grant-related administrative and fiscal duties, Commission staff spent substantial time and effort on many other court improvement efforts and projects, such as:

- Published two annual reports, one for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2011 and the other for the calendar year ending December 31, 2011, which can be linked to here: <http://texaschildrenscommission.gov/PDF/2011AnnualReport.pdf>
- Developed and distributed several Jurist in Residence letters, which are periodic communiqués that focus on a specific issue or challenge judges face while hearing CPS cases, including Permanency Care Assistance for Families, Court Hearing Practices and Costs, Department of Family and Protective Services Subpoena Policy, CPS Staff Realignment, Impact of Budget Deficits, New Appellate Rules in Termination of Parental Rights. All JIR letters can be linked to here: <http://texaschildrenscommission.gov/news.htm>
- Continued work pursuant to its Legal Representation Study to reform legal representation in child protection cases. .
- Continued a partnership with Texas Appleseed engage in projects that focus on improving outcomes for children who are in the permanent managing conservatorship of DFPS, including funding and planning first of its kind judicial summit focused on permanency for older foster youth.
- Participated in the Public-Private Partnership to help redesign foster care in Texas.
- Continued collaboration on implementation of the state's Program Improvement Plan (PIP) and Title IV-E Audit and PIP.
- Held two Round Table discussions on budget constraints and its effect on providing services to families, and the use of psychotropic medication in the Texas foster care population. Round Table Reports can be linked to here: <http://texaschildrenscommission.gov/resources.htm>
- Funded over 4,000 copies of The Foster Youth Justice Project's Guide to Those Aging out of Foster Care in Texas, which Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid has distributed to foster youth and those who work with them.
- Consulted on (and provided funding for) judicial training events to train judicial officers or court personnel through the Office of Court Administration and the Texas Center for the Judiciary's training conferences and national conferences.
- Consulted on refinements and provided funding for the Child Protection Case Management System (CPCMS) that was developed with CIP funds and launched in 2009 in the 17 Texas child protection specialty courts. The CPCMS system incorporates several of the Building a Better Court performance measures that were published in early 2009.

- Produced the final report of the Education Committee – the Texas Blueprint: Transforming Education Outcomes for Children and Youth in Foster Care. Link to here: <http://texaschildrenscommission.gov/PDF/TheTexasBlueprint.pdf>
- Participated in a Foster Care Expert Workgroup established by Texas Appleseed to address barriers to permanency for youth who are in the state’s permanent managing conservatorship.
- Traveled to the reservations of two of the three federally-recognized tribes, met with representatives of all three tribes, and advanced the relationships between child welfare stakeholders and the tribal nations of Texas.
- Created new collaborative workgroup focusing on trauma-informed judicial and attorney practices and gathered national best practices to include in legal education.

Ongoing Collaboration

The Commission's creation and activities have increased the visibility of child protection issues at the state and local levels and its collaborative structure has encouraged greater stakeholder participation in court improvement initiatives. The Commission engages in and promotes a culture of collaboration in Texas between the judiciary, DFPS, and other stakeholders through routine and scheduled interaction and through joint projects. Commission staff is active in many collaborative activities and, in addition to staffing and overseeing many of the aforementioned projects, also engaged in the following activities between October 1, 2011 and September 30, 2012:

- Sponsored and participated in weekly collaborative conference calls with child welfare stakeholders, including DFPS executive leaders. Commission staff organized and held roughly 40 weekly collaborative conference calls that lasted approximately one hour each and included several collaborative partners on each call. Collaborative partners who attended the vast majority of these calls included the CPS Assistant Commissioner and other high-level CPS staff, the OCA director and his staff, Commission and Supreme Court staff, and representatives from Texas CASA and the Texas Center for the Judiciary. Occasionally, other invitees, such as judges and legislative staff, attended the meetings, depending on the issues addressed. The weekly collaborative meetings often served as a springboard for ideas that became staff-directed projects. During the calls, each partner provided a brief synopsis of their organization's current efforts and concerns and described how they thought other collaborative partners might assist or be affected. The meetings served to inform partners of the many ongoing initiatives in Texas to improve the child protection system.
- Sponsored, funded, facilitated, or participated in 79 Commission meetings, committee or workgroup meetings, or conference calls totaling 1,296 meeting hours attended by 1,054 attendees.
- Thousands of individual stakeholders participated in or benefited from a Commission-sponsored activity or grant-funded activity in FY 2012. Commission-funded and Commission-sponsored activities generated more than \$758,139 of in-kind or cash match in FY 2012. View details at this link: <http://www.texaschildrenscommission.gov/pdf/fy2012match.pdf>.

PROJECT LIST

[Texas CASA](#)

[Office of Court Administration Child Protection Court Judicial Support](#)

[Lubbock Transition Center](#)

[Disability Rights, Texas](#)

[Children's Commission Education Committee Project](#)

[Legal Representation Study \(LRS\) Workgroup](#)

[Webb County Drug Court](#)

[CPS Judges Bench Book](#)

[Children's Commission Jurist in Residence](#)

[Children's Commission Round Table Series](#)

[Judicial Technical Assistance](#)

[Judicial Disproportionality Workgroup \(JDW\)](#)

[Psychoactive Medication Workgroup \(PMW\)](#)

[Trauma Informed Care Workgroup \(TICW\)](#)

[Tribal Initiatives](#)

[Texas Center for Judiciary \(TCJ\)](#)

[Office of Court Administration Judicial Training for Child Protection Court \(CPC\) Judges](#)

[Attorney Training and Resources](#)

[Data and Technology CIP Projects and Staff](#)

[Office of Court Administration Remote Interpreter Project](#)

[Uvalde County Video Conferencing Project](#)

Outcome #1: The project used live trainings and webinars to train volunteers, case supervisors, program directors and executive directors in advocacy and case management. It also produced a multidisciplinary video used to train local and state-level CASA program staff as well as judges and other legal system stakeholders. The project expanded knowledge and skills of those trained and thereby contributed to capacity building, court function improvement, and systemic reform at a state level as well as locally in the communities where the trained staff, volunteers, judges, and legal stakeholders implement the advocacy and case management activities.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: Round 2 of CFSR identified issues of permanency, placement stability, long-term foster care, family relationships and continuity, needs of child and family and services to address their needs, notice of court proceedings and the opportunity to be heard at proceedings.

Measurable Objective: Texas CASA program staff, local programs, executive directors, program directors, volunteers and caseworker supervisors will attend some or all of the training events and submit evaluations for feedback.

Timeframe: 10/01/11 – 09/30/12

Funding Stream: Basic

Strategic Category: All

- Capacity Building Court Function Improvement Systemic Reform

Activities or Project Description	Anticipated Outputs and Results of Activities	Data Source for Evaluation (CQI Element)	Feedback (CQI Element)	Progress Toward Outputs and Activities	Collaboration
Training of Facilitators	Train approximately 32 CASA Staff to facilitate pre-service training for new volunteers	Participant Survey: CASA surveyed training participants to demonstrate knowledge gained from the training on how to assist volunteers in better understanding the importance of	CASA shared feedback with the Children’s Commission via its annual progress report.	Trained 70, attendees rated training at 3.52 out of a possible 5 points.	Texas CASA collaborated with the Children’s Commission, DFPS, Texas Foster Family Association, TexProtects, and all 69 local programs.

		<p>permanency for children, which improves advocacy on behalf of the child.</p>			
<p>Core Advocacy Skills Training</p>	<p>E-learning that will provide training on the child protection system and the various roles (GAL, education, mental health, foster care workers, legal and court systems)</p>	<p>Participant Survey:</p> <p>Each session had an over-all evaluation with questions for all trainees regarding what they learned and how it would help them achieve the objective of advocating for permanency.</p>	<p>CASA will share feedback with the Children’s Commission and other child welfare stakeholders as needed and appropriate.</p>	<p>Trained 36 staff, rated 3.61 out of a possible 5 points.</p>	
<p>Advanced Advocacy Skills Training</p>	<p>Series of bi-monthly seminars for local CASA program staff and volunteers and will focus on topics such as Advocating for Permanency, Identifying and facilitating temporary and permanent placement with relatives and/or healthy connections with relatives; Advocating for Transitioning Youth, Mental Health Advocacy for Children, including medication reviews, New laws and how they can improve outcomes for children</p>	<p>CASA did not report evaluation data on this activity.</p>	<p>CASA will share feedback with the Children’s Commission and other child welfare stakeholders as needed and appropriate.</p>	<p>Held 12 webinars that trained approximately 649 CASA staff, volunteers, and community partners. 2 webinars that trained approximately 649 CASA staff, volunteers, and community partners.</p>	

Executive and Program Director Training	Training for CASA executive and program directors on Casey Permanency Values Training, which is designed to instill a sense of urgency regarding achieving permanency for ALL children in care.	Participant Survey Evaluations by participants showing pre-training and post-training attitudes toward permanency. CASA also committed to collecting information from programs regarding what they hope to improve in their local jurisdictions to achieve permanency. CASA did not submit evaluation data on this activity.	CASA will share feedback with the Children's Commission and other child welfare stakeholders as needed and appropriate.	Trained 69 program and executive directors	
Multidisciplinary Video	Training video for volunteers and other child welfare stakeholders. Each segment will have legal resources, CPS structure, practice and terminology and CASA's role and responsibility	Survey of local programs regarding usefulness of video CASA has not used for training yet.	CASA will share feedback with the Children's Commission and other child welfare stakeholders as needed and appropriate.	Completed Video in 2012	

Narrative Description:

CASA produced a new training video for local CASA program staff and volunteers that can also be utilized by attorneys, judges, CPS staff and a variety of other stakeholders. The video illustrates the various legal stages and processes in child protection cases and includes multidisciplinary issues such as mental health and substance abuse. The video also trains viewers on case outcomes of

adoption, family reunification, family preservation, and youth transitioning from care. The video will be used to train up to 69 CASA programs statewide.

Texas CASA conducted two Training of Facilitators events for 70 staff members from 35 local CASA programs. The course is designed to teach staff how to effectively facilitate pre-service training for new volunteers and incorporates adult-learning methods, new technology and instruction on screening of volunteers during training.

CASA delivered one in-person Core Advocacy Skills Training classes designed for new CASA Staff and as a refresher for veteran CASA Staff. This training was provided 36 staff members and covered the movement of a case through both the legal and child protection system with an emphasis on specific opportunities for CASA to advocate for plans, services and recommendations that will improve outcomes for children.

Texas CASA provided Advanced Advocacy Skills Training to CASA Program staff with specific focus on trauma informed advocacy, core concepts of collaboration with the courts, CPS attorneys and community partners. The training was delivered monthly by webinar (12 separate trainings) and averaged 70 participants per event for a total of approximately 649 individuals. The training is designed to increase knowledge and competencies around permanency and wellbeing for children. The webinars were utilized by CASA staff, volunteers, board members and stakeholders. Topics covered included advocacy for youth in RTC settings, advocacy for dual system youth and culturally sensitive advocacy.

Texas CASA conducted one Program Retreat for 69 executives and program directors. The training included trauma-informed advocacy and core concepts of collaboration with the courts, CPS, attorneys and community partners. It also provided permanency values training and utilized concepts from the Permanency Planning Toolkit – A Framework for working with Older Youth, a project supported by CIP last year.

Outcome #1: The project enabled specially trained judges to more effectively handle child protection courts in rural areas of Texas. Access to CIP supported tools helps judges ensure due process for hearing participants and ensures a more thorough and meaningful hearing process. The CPCMS case management system helps ensure high quality legal representation because the judge can more efficiently appoint and track attorney caseloads, whether they appear in court on behalf of their client and allows the judge to make notes indicating things such as preparedness of the attorney and effective representation tactics.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: CPC judges and their staff are assigned to child protection cases in rural counties and are responsible for overseeing the court-related aspects identified in CFSR Round 2. CPC judges oversee jurisdictions that require them to travel several days each week. Cell phones are often the only means for conducting business when not in court (when en-route to another county or court) and wireless capability within the courthouse is essential to these judges because it allows them to access their cases and case management system within the larger OCA network. Access to case information during the hearing and the ability to collect data and information during the hearing and input it into the case management system contributes to the efficient and thorough oversight of all aspects under the court’s purview.

Measurable Objective: Providing day-to-day communication and case management support for Texas CPC judges.

Timeframe: 10/01/11 – 09/30/12

Funding Stream: Basic

Strategic Category: Court Function Improvement, Systemic Reform

- Capacity Building Court Function Improvement Systemic Reform

Activities	Anticipated Outputs and Results of Activities	Data Source for Evaluation (CQI Element)	Feedback (CQI Element)	Progress Toward Outputs and Activities	Collaboration
Support of Administrative Costs	Help ensure that CPC judges can stay in touch / communicate with their staff and OCA as they travel around the state to rural counties hearing child protection cases	OCA tracks court performance and toolkit measures through the Child Protection Case Management System (CPCMS)	OCA will share reporting with Children’s Commission staff and Commissioners, DFPS, and other child welfare stakeholders who are interested as most of the data collected is publicly	CPC Judges used the case management system to handle 8929 cases involving 18,179 parents and 16,115 children in 126 rural Texas counties. The CPCMS also managed information and case management	Children’s Commission, District Judges in counties where the child protection court judges serve.

		CPC judges and OCA Staff use the CPCMS reports to assess outcomes from each court, workload, and resource allocation. In January 2013, OCA and the Children's Commission will conduct a strategic planning session to assess reallocation of resources based, in part, on CPCMS report data.	available	for 484 CASA and other volunteers, 24 judges, 20 court staff, and 3301 attorneys were also included in the information management tools unique to CPCMS.	
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Narrative Description:

CPCMS is currently in use by all 17 Child Protection Courts (CPC) covering 126 mostly-rural counties. This project ensures judges have access to their case management system while traveling in remote and rural areas of the state. In FY2012, CPC Judges used the case management system to handle 8929 cases involving 18,179 parents and 16,115 children. 484 CASA and other volunteers, 24 judges, 20 court staff, and 3301 attorneys were also included in the information management tools unique to CPCMS.

Lubbock Transition Center

[\(Return to Project List\)](#)

Outcome #1: Change in practice to move away from traditional court hearing to an individualized review for youth beginning at age 15 while still involving the child’s family and caregiver, if appropriate, in a non-court setting.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: Round 2 of CFSR identified permanency for children in foster care for long periods of time, needs and services of the child, parents, foster parents, child and family involvement in case planning, and notice and engagement in the court review process as issues under court oversight in need of attention. The Lubbock Transition Center allows transitioning youth the ability to participate in their permanency and placement review hearings in a non-court setting which is more accommodating to their schedule and particular needs, it is less constrained and can produce more meaningful dialogue between the judge and the youth. This in turn can affect the timeliness of permanency for the youth and the judge may be able to assist with preservation and continuity of family relationships, assess the needs and services by hearing directly from the youth. The setting is also more welcoming for other family and caregivers involved in the youth’s life.

Measurable Objective: Involve transitioning youth in informal process to help transition to independent living.

Timeframe: 10/01/11 – 09/30/12

Funding Stream: Basic

Strategic Category: All

- Capacity Building Court Function Improvement Systemic Reform

Activities	Anticipated Outputs and Results of Activities	Data Source for Evaluation (CQI Element)	Feedback (CQI Element)	Progress Toward Outputs and Activities	Collaboration
Support of Court Costs Associated with Holding Hearings At the LTC	Involve transitioning youth in informal process to help transition to independent living, which is expected to provide the youth a greater level of comfort, empowering them to voice their own opinions and concerns.	LTC will track number of hearings held and will survey youth about their experience in the informal setting. See Progress Section of matrix.	LTC will share data collected and survey responses Children’s Commission, DFPS, and other child welfare stakeholders who are interested.	Lubbock Transition Center sought to serve over 100 youth through the Center. The total number of parents, youth, CASA volunteers, judges, court staff, attorneys, agencies, and other stakeholders who accessed, participated, or provided assistance to youth through the	Children’s Commission, DFPS, District and Associate Judges in Lubbock, CASA, Buckner Children and Family Services Lubbock Dispute Resolution Center, Preparation for Adult Living Services, Services to At-Risk

				<p>Transition Center was 350, and some accessed or served more than once.</p> <p>Monthly meetings for youth 16-25 began in August 2011 expanded to four to five times per month due to the high numbers of youth being served. Over 90% of youth referred accessed another resource through the Center, and 85% of the youth served obtained stable housing.</p> <p>Court hearings were held each month, 2nd Tuesday as scheduled by Judge Kevin Hart.</p> <p>The Aftercare Coordinator and Director of the Transition center attended each hearing.</p> <p>All Service Review hearings for youth 18 and older (in extended foster care or receiving transitional living services) and all Placement Review hearings for youth 16 and older are conducted at the Transition Center.</p> <p>The Transition Center expanded the hearing hours from only afternoons to all day once per month and will be expanding all</p>	<p>Youth (STAR), Emergency Shelter, Long-term Residential, and Home-based Foster Care, Children's Aftercare Reentry Experience (CARE), Texas Youth Commission, Bexar County Juvenile Probation Department, Kids Averted from Placement Services (KAPS), Job Opportunities for Low Income Individuals (JOLI), Families For a Future (FFF), Healthy Start Laredo, Great Start, Precious Minds, New Connections (PMNC), Right Choices for Life (RFL), Rural Teens on the Texas/Mexico border, Adoption Services Providers, Emergency Management Services, Family Ties Organization. Health and Human Services Commission, Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)</p>
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				<p>placement review hearings to include 15 year old youth.</p> <p>Case notes were taken at each hearing. Each youth's hearing was entered into the BCFS ETO system.</p> <p>Evaluations were obtained from each youth in attendance of their hearing. Evaluations have been collected but not analyzed.</p> <p>One problem noted: Youth continue not to receive notification of their hearings from DFPS nor are they invited at times. Judge Hart now emails the Aftercare Coordinator as well as Lubbock Transition center Director the docket prior to the hearings so that we can notify youth.</p>	
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Narrative Description:

Lubbock Transition Center sought to serve over 100 youth through the Center and actually served over 800 youth in FY 2012. Monthly meetings for youth 16-25 began in August 2011 expanded to four to five times per month due to the high numbers of youth being served. Over 90% of youth referred accessed another resource through the Center, and 85% of the youth served obtained stable housing.

Court hearings were held each month, 2nd Tuesday as scheduled by Judge Kevin Hart. The Aftercare Coordinator and Director of the Transition center were requested at each hearing to be sure the youth's wishes and thoughts were represented even if the youth was not present. All Service Review hearings for youth 18 and older (in extended foster care or receiving transitional living services) and all Placement Review hearings for youth 16 and older are conducted at the Transition Center. The Transition Center expanded the hearing hours from only afternoons to all day once per month and will be expanding all placement review hearings to include 15 year old youth.

One problem noted: Youth continue not to receive notification of their hearings from DFPS nor are they invited at times. Judge Hart now emails the Aftercare Coordinator as well as Lubbock Transition center Director the docket prior to the hearings so that we can notify youth.

Data Collection: Case notes were taken at each hearing. Each youth's hearing was entered into the BCFS ETO system. Evaluations were obtained from each youth in attendance of their hearing. Evaluations have been collected but not analyzed.

The total number of parents, youth, CASA volunteers, judges, court staff, attorneys, agencies, and other stakeholders who accessed, participated, or provided assistance to youth through the Transition Center was 350, and some accessed or served more than once.

Outcome #1: Change in court process, legal practice, stakeholder knowledge and skills, and system behaviors and capacity, state policy and legislation in a manner that results in improved outcomes for youth affected and exiting the juvenile justice and/or foster care system.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: Children under the PMC of DFPS have infrequent interaction with the courts, and rare have attorneys ad litem or CASA volunteers who regularly report to courts about the children’s progress. Their problems are exacerbated when they are placed in State Supported Living Centers and in the Texas Youth Commission. Texas has the highest number of children in institutions designed for people with intellectual disabilities like the state schools and other findings report that institutionalization of children under 18 “negatively impacts all areas of their development including physical, intellectual, psychological, and emotional growth.”

Measurable Objective: Provide high-quality legal representation, educate system stakeholders on benefits of this type of legal representation, collect data on judicial system, youth, and attorney experiences.

Timeframe: 10/01/11 – 09/30/12

Funding Stream: Basic

Strategic Category: All

- Capacity Building Court Function Improvement Systemic Reform

Project Activities	Anticipated Outputs and Results of Activities	Data Source for Evaluation (CQI Element)	Feedback (CQI Element)	Progress Toward Outputs and Activities	Collaboration
Provide Legal Representation to Dually Managed Youth	See Below	DRTX shared project data with students from the UT LBJ School of Public Affairs UT developed a survey form for clients to fill out before and after our representation. DRTX has started using pre- and post-survey form with our new clients.		118 clients received legal advocacy they otherwise would not have, and increased safety, permanency and well being.	Texas Attorneys, CASA, DFPS Caseworkers, Child Care Administrators, Child Placing Agencies, Judges, TYC Officials, State Bar of Texas, National Disability Rights organization, Children’s

		DR TX is using client surveys as of FY2013. Some information re quality of legal representation is represented in the Progress Section of this matrix, and below in the case specific section.			Commission
	More appropriate living and treatment conditions	Grant recipient will monitor number of clients served with regard to this particular need, and survey youth participants, judges, other stakeholders about their experience	DR will share data collected and survey responses Children's Commission, DFPS, and other child welfare stakeholders who are interested.	Project attorneys advocated for improved treatment and living conditions for 58 clients. See Narrative Report for case specific feedback	
	Appropriate health and mental health services	Grant recipient will monitor number of clients served with regard to this particular need, and survey youth participants, judges, other stakeholders about their experience	DR will share data collected and survey responses Children's Commission, DFPS, and other child welfare stakeholders who are interested.	Project attorneys advocated for appropriate health and mental health services for 74 clients. See Narrative Report for case specific feedback	
	Free and appropriate public education for youth receiving special education services	Grant recipient will monitor number of clients served with regard to this particular need, and survey youth participants, judges, other stakeholders about their experience	DR will share data collected and survey responses Children's Commission, DFPS, and other child welfare stakeholders who are interested.	Project attorneys advocated for free and appropriate public education for youth receiving special education services for 68 clients. See Narrative Report for case specific feedback	

	Better transition planning for youth	Grant recipient will monitor number of clients served with regard to this particular need, and survey youth participants, judges, other stakeholders about their experience	DR will share data collected and survey responses Children's Commission, DFPS, and other child welfare stakeholders who are interested.	Project attorneys advocated for better transition services for 55 youth. See Narrative Report for case specific feedback	
	Maintain community placements for six months after discharge from institution for 80% of youth represented	Grant recipient will monitor number of clients served with regard to this particular need, and survey youth participants, judges, other stakeholders about their experience	DR will share data collected and survey responses Children's Commission, DFPS, and other child welfare stakeholders who are interested.	Due to project attorney advocacy, 100% of clients who were discharged from an institution had maintained their community placements six months later. See Narrative Report for case specific feedback	
	Maintain community placements 90% of youth at risk of institutionalization	Grant recipient will monitor number of clients served with regard to this particular need, and survey youth participants, judges, other stakeholders about their experience	DR will share data collected and survey responses Children's Commission, DFPS, and other child welfare stakeholders who are interested.	Due to project attorney advocacy, 100% of clients who were discharged from an institution had maintained their community placements six months later. See Narrative Report for case specific feedback	

Narrative Description and Case-specific Feedback:

Disability Rights attorneys represented 118 youth during the grant period to increase their safety, permanency and well-being by advocating on their behalf in a variety of settings. The attorneys have been able to educate courts about the negative effects of institutionalization on foster youth as well as the positive benefits of community placements for such youth. Courts frequently have invited them to train lawyers and caseworkers in their jurisdictions on disability related issues. They are often called upon by judges, attorneys and case workers to provide technical assistance in cases involving foster youth with disabilities who are not served by the project

Project attorneys have been successful in providing safer environments for clients by advocating for more appropriate living and treatment condition, usually in settings outside of court such as treatment team meetings. They often have used internal grievance procedures, and their success has prompted local courts to ask project attorneys to train lawyers and case workers in strategies for advocating for clients in treatment facilities.

Before project attorneys were appointed and began advocating for their clients' to receive appropriate health and mental health services, their clients had failed to make any progress toward completing the treatment necessary to obtain their release from juvenile justice facilities. As a result of advocacy efforts, their clients were able to make significant progress because they were able to receive increased access to mental health services. By improving their mental health issues, clients could take advantage of discharge planning efforts and secure their release from juvenile justice facilities and other institutional settings

Although a significant number of their clients are eligible to receive special education services, it is very rare that they do without the advocacy of project attorneys. Because project attorneys raised the systemic issue of juvenile justice facilities failing to identify youth with disabilities previously found to be eligible for special education, the Texas Juvenile Justice Department improved its procedures, and project attorneys have see the problem far less frequently.

Because project attorneys engage in a substantial amount of transition planning for youth, they have been instrumental in securing for their clients placement in transitional living programs. Project attorneys have successfully raised courts' awareness of extending jurisdiction to clients who need it to prepare to transition successfully.

Project attorneys conducted 10 formal trainings attended by approximately 773 individuals, including attorneys, case workers, volunteers, and judges across Texas. The trainings focus on due process by teaching courtroom advocacy skills and on questions judges can ask in placement reviews and actions they can take.

1. DRTx was appointed as attorney ad litem to a 20 year old foster youth with mental health disabilities who was living in a transitional living program. She was ready to leave foster care and begin to live independently, but did not want to begin her adult life under the name that connected her to her family of origin that had abused and neglected her. DRTx successfully petitioned the court and obtained a court order to change her legal name shedding her connection to the family that had abused her. When she left foster care and entered her adult life, she did so with a name and identity that reflected who she is and who she wants to be as an adult. DRTx worked with her team at CPS and the shelter to ensure she received all benefits as a youth aging out of foster care and had a successful transition. As a result of our interventions, she also successfully obtained employment and an apartment and left foster care services. She is now living independently and working in the community.

2. DRTx was appointed as co-attorney ad litem to V.S., a 14 yr old foster child with disabilities who had been assigned to a high-security TJJD facility two weeks after she had been removed from her Residential Treatment Center (RTC) and sent to a psychiatric hospital. The juvenile judge had revoked her probation, citing her removal from the RTC and hospitalization as a violation of her

probation, and committed her to the TJJD in Brownwood, TX. As she had recently been placed in foster care after being sexually abused by two uncles, her CPS judge asked DRTx to intervene and ask the juvenile judge to reconsider her sentence. We appeared at the hearing to provide technical assistance about available services in the community that could provide therapeutic care for her trauma and mental illnesses, and explained how the limited TJJD treatment would not be appropriate or sufficient for V.S. The juvenile judge considered the information we provided and reviewed a report that recommended V.S. not be placed in a secure facility. The juvenile judge subsequently released V.S. from TJJD and ordered placement in a therapeutic RTC.

3. DRTx attorney was appointed for a 17 year old youth named J.M., who has an intellectual disability and was in an adult jail for assault of a public servant at the time of our ad litem appointment. DFPS claimed they had no appropriate placement for the young man, and there was no plan to provide him services through the Home and Community-based Services (HCS) Medicaid waiver. HCS is a Medicaid waiver program that provides a lifetime service package and placement options for individuals with intellectual disabilities. While the typical waiting list is 10-15 years to obtain an HCS slot, DFPS has reserved slots that youth can access, when they are aging out of the foster care system and are at risk of institutionalization. DRTx advocated for HCS services and personally indentified a foster companion care home where J.M. could be served, in the same city as his closest relatives. DRTx provided advocacy at a special education meeting, known as an ARD, for improved behavioral support and improved transition plan, and provided technical support to his criminal defense attorney who was able to secure dismissal of all charges with information provided about J.M.'s disability. J.M. has been in an HCS foster companion home for over six months and is doing well in every regard, including avoiding any ongoing involvement with the justice system.

4. In the winter of 2010, DRTx was appointed to represent M.P., a foster youth with disabilities who was incarcerated in a TJJD facility in Brownwood. At that time, the judge let us know her case would be especially difficult. M.P. had behaviors that were assaultive, had suicidal ideations, and had never maintained a residential placement without running away. She had been a prostitute at the age of 9 and had been sexually abused for a number of years. She made no progress at all in TJJD. After a year, we successfully argued for her to be released from TJJD to a treatment center so she could finally receive treatment she desperately needed. The placement went well for a short period of time, but problems arose quickly and we found a new placement for M.P. On her first day in the new placement, she ran away. During her time on the run, she contacted her attorney periodically to let him know she was safe. After more than a month, she returned to her previous placement. However, she subsequently ran away again. Running away is a major problem we face, because, there is really nothing we can do other than encouraging them to come back into care if we can find ways to contact them. M.P. did return to care, but was two months pregnant by the time she did so. At this point M.P. still required treatment, not further incarceration. We represented her at her parole revocation hearing and fortunately her parole was status was maintained after the hearing. We next needed to find M.P. a placement. M.P. has no relatives with whom she is in contact and her home county was miles away from her placement. She did not have many stable supports to help her.

We located a placement for her that would offer her educational opportunities, on-site mental health treatment, and parent training. This placement was significantly less restrictive than any M.P. had experienced. She finally thrived and made true progress. Because of the freedom she had, she had no inclination to run away. We represented her in her ARD meetings with the local school

district and worked with the residential facility to find the appropriate mental health treatment. We next located a placement designed for teen mothers. While they rejected her application due to her disabilities and her criminal history, we successfully appealed that rejection with the head of the facility. M.P. moved to that facility when she was 7 months pregnant. We also secured a free doula to help M.P. with the birth process. We were with M.P. and her doula when M.P. delivered her baby girl at midnight in the hospital. We continued to work with M.P. until she was released from TJJD parole and we were sure she had the resources she needed to be a successful parent. She is now thriving in her placement, finishing her high school diploma, and remaining out of the justice system. The court released us from her case as a result of M.P.'s success.

5. We were appointed as attorney ad litem for N.W. when he was a 15 year old incarcerated in a TJJD facility in Mart, TX. N.W. was sexually assaulted as a young child, developed significant mental illness and had sexually assaulted other youth. He was now regressing dramatically and we advocated for him to move to the TJJD facility in Giddings so he could begin sex offender treatment. There he began to cut himself, a behavior he did not exhibit before serving time at TJJD. He also picked up four felonies for assaulting public servants and was eventually adjudicated, recommitted, and sent to TJJD's mental health treatment facility in Corsicana. There he continued to regress. He cut himself so severely that he frequently required blood transfusions. Eventually, he presented such a significant risk to himself, that he was committed to a state hospital. He was only supposed to be there for a short time, but we advocated for him to remain there. His assaultive and self-injurious behaviors were so horrifying that the hospital actually said "we cannot serve someone with these TYC-like behaviors." However, after a week, N.W. began to make progress. He stopped cutting and started to improve outside of the environment of a juvenile justice facility. At this point, based on the recommendation of the doctors at the psychiatric hospital, we obtained an order from N.W.'s child protection court that determined treatment in TJJD was not adequate and that he needed an outside placement. We located such a placement and then obtained agreement from N.W.'s treatment team for him to go there. We then worked with the juvenile court that had committed N.W. to TJJD to waive his requirement to register as a sex offender despite the fact that he had not yet completed sex offender treatment. That was the only way N.W. could move to a non-secure facility. In the new facility, N.W. continued to improve. After four months, N.W. completed sex offender treatment and was placed on TJJD parole. Once on parole, N.W. moved first to a foster home and then to the home of a relative. Just last week, the judge removed us from N.W.'s case. He has not cut himself in over a year and has not had criminal involvement since being in the community. He still bears the deep and visible scars of his cutting on his arms, but his physician has recommended a laser treatment so the scars can be minimized.

Outcome #1: Changes and improvements in process, practice, knowledge, skills and behaviors of members of the Texas judiciary, attorneys, CASA, educators and other school personnel, DFPS, and education and child welfare stakeholders.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: According to national studies, youth in foster care often have poor educational outcomes, especially in comparison with the general child population. Foster children and youth face additional hurdles when trying to succeed academically, including multiple placement and school changes, therapeutic or other needs that must be addressed during school hours, missing school to visit with parents or siblings, and a chaotic educational history prior to entering foster care in the first place. On top of this, foster children and youth who are of school age find themselves lost in and between the child protection and education systems.. Courts and stakeholders informally report that school changes and the subsequent loss of records, credits, services, and support systems greatly hinder the academic success of school-age foster children. According to data collected by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and shared with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), educational outcomes of Texas foster youth reflect what is happening nationally.

Measurable Objective: Multi-disciplinary collaborative meetings, increased data collection and sharing, development of resources and training, training events, and engagement in collaborative efforts.

Timeframe: 10/01/11 – 09/30/12

Funding Stream: Basic

Strategic Category: All

- Capacity Building Court Function Improvement Systemic Reform

Project Activities	Anticipated Outputs and Results of Activities	Data Source for Evaluation (CQI Element)	Feedback (CQI Element)	Progress Toward Outputs and Activities	Collaboration
Education Committee Meetings	Hold and participate in committee and other collaborative meetings.	The Children’s Commission and committee members will survey existing data to determine baseline for education related outcomes of foster youth and to establish long-	Share feedback with the Children’s Commission and other education and child welfare stakeholders as needed and appropriate.	Completed. A smaller, Implementation Task Force and an Advisory Committee have been created and will be appointed by Supreme Court Order by January	DFPS, Texas Education Agency, Texas Association of School Boards, Texas Association of School Administrators, Members of the Texas judiciary, Texas CASA and local CASA programs, Casey Family Programs,

		<p>term goals.</p> <p>Much of the baseline data for education related outcomes was examined by the Education Committee and many of the recommendations in the Blueprint are based on that data.</p> <p>Also, because most of FY2012 was spent concluding the EC meetings and issuing a report, followed by awareness and education efforts, the CC had not evaluated pre and post awareness of stakeholders as of 9/30/12. However, a large, multidisciplinary summit is being held in February 2013 and an attendee survey is being developed.</p>		2013, to replace the Education Committee and implement its recommendations.	<p>ABA Legal Center on Children and the Law</p> <p>Center on Foster Care and Education, Texas</p> <p>Juvenile Justice Department, Texas</p> <p>REACH, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, Texas Workforce Board and local workforce boards,</p> <p>Independent School Districts and staff, including foster care liaisons, Disability Rights Texas, Texas Foster Family Association, Foster parents and child placing agencies, School law attorneys, State Bar of Texas, Education Service Centers, Texas Appleseed, regional Education Service Centers.</p>
Education Committee Final Report	Issue final report, including dissemination plan and plan for future collaboration. Lead collaboration efforts.	The Children's Commission and committee members will survey court, child welfare, and education stakeholders to demonstrate knowledge gained Education Committee activities and recommendations.	Share feedback with the Children's Commission and other child welfare stakeholders as needed and appropriate.	Final report completed and officially released May 3, 2012. Report posted online and disseminated by mail. Implementation Task Force created to continue collaboration and implement recommendations.	
Texas Trio Grant	Participate as lead partner in Texas Trio Project.	The Children's Commission and Texas Trio Project partners will participate in project	Share feedback with the Children's Commission and other child welfare stakeholders as needed	Assistant Director Tiffany Roper continues her leadership role in the TRIO grant activities, such	

		evaluation conducted by University of Texas School of Social Work.	and appropriate.	as working with the regional multi-disciplinary team in Houston to implement goals, developing a state action plan that includes strategies for inter-agency data sharing, and developing resources and tools for statewide use, such as the nearly complete 100-plus page resource guide for educators.	
Raise Awareness of Educational Needs of Children and Youth in Care and of work of Education Committee	<p>Participate in national and state forums to raise awareness of work of Education Committee, such as:</p> <p>The National Convocation of Commissions on Children, hosted by the National Center for State Courts, September 21-23, 2011, Salt Lake City</p> <p>Child Welfare, Education, and the Courts: A Collaboration to Strengthen Educational Successes of Children and Youth in Foster Care, November 3-4, 2011, Washington, D.C.</p>	The Children's Commission and committee members will survey court, child welfare, and education stakeholders to demonstrate knowledge gained Education Committee activities and recommendations.	Share feedback with the Children's Commission and other child welfare stakeholders as needed and appropriate.	<p>Children's Commission Assistant Director, Tiffany Roper, continues to make presentations routinely at state and national conferences.</p> <p>Both TEA and the Children's Commission have almost completed new informational websites on education and foster youth.</p>	

Narrative Description:

The Education Committee held its final meeting in April 2012 to conclude its work and discuss its final report, *The Texas Blueprint: Transforming Education Outcomes for Children and Youth in Foster Care*. The final report, submitted to the Children's Commission and the Supreme Court of Texas at a reception held May 3, 2012, represented collaborative discussion and problem-

solving of over 100 court, child welfare, and education stakeholders over a 19-month period. In total, the Education Committee and its subcommittees and workgroups met more than 50 times. Although the Education Committee officially met its charge with the submission of its final report, members agreed to continue future collaboration. Next steps for the committee include:

Hold annual meeting of Education Committee to continue collaboration: By Supreme Court Order before the end of January 2013, the Education Committee will be replaced by a smaller Implementation Task Force and an Advisory Committee whose members, comprised of education, judicial and CPS leaders and staff, will work to implement the recommendations.

Create a task force to periodically meet to develop an implementation plan and assess progress of implementation: An Implementation Task Force has been created and will meet officially for the first time in 2013.

Support a statewide, multi-disciplinary education and foster youth summit: The Education Summit is scheduled for February 19-20, 2013. The by invitation-only two-day conference will be a multi-disciplinary event with panels of experts and former foster youth. Invitees to the summit include superintendents of school districts with higher numbers of students in foster care, the 20 regional education service center directors, courts with jurisdiction of child welfare cases, DFPS decision-makers and high-level staff, and CASA programs. The summit will also include a facilitated break-out session by discipline, where stakeholders will discuss ways their discipline may improve how it supports the educational needs of students in care.

Raise awareness: This ongoing effort began with the May 3, 2012 release of the final report that included a press conference and dissemination by mail and in person of hundreds of copies of the report, which is also posted online. (Click [here](#) and [here](#) for press coverage). Children's Commission Assistant Director, Tiffany Roper, and several Education Committee members have made presentations at nearly a dozen state and national conferences and meetings.

Assist in the creation of tools, resources, and training: In October 2011, the Texas Education Agency, in partnership with DFPS and the Children's Commission, received a 17-month grant to support collaboration between education, child welfare, and the courts in Texas. As part of this grant, a state-level team began its work with stakeholders in Harris County, including the Houston Independent School District, to implement some of the strategies identified in the Education Committee's Texas Blueprint. Additionally, the state-level team has been developing training materials and other resources for education, court, and child welfare stakeholders, particularly the newly-created foster care liaisons now statutorily required in each school district. Commission staff has contributed to these materials by focusing on tools geared toward judges and attorneys. Commission staff has continued working closely with partners at TEA and DFPS, including holding weekly calls and monthly meetings.

The Education Committee's work and release of The Texas Blueprint: Transforming Education Outcomes for Children and Youth in Foster Care, has prompted increased interest in and attention to the issue across the state. A TEA Commissioner sent a letter to all of the state's school administrators outlining the unique challenges children in foster care face and ways local schools and school districts can work with DFPS to help them maintain education stability. In development and near completion is a 100-plus page resource guide for educators and school district foster care liaisons regarding the experience of children in foster care and how educators can partner with CPS and others to positively influence their education.

Outcome #1: A change and improvement in the process, practice, knowledge, skills and behaviors of members of the Texas judiciary and attorneys providing legal representation to children, parents and child welfare agency staff.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: Texas statute provides the right to court-appointed representation to children and indigent parents involved in CPS suits, but adequate representation is not always provided. Too often the representation is perfunctory and so deficient as not to amount to representation at all. Meanwhile, the children and parents are subjected to the trauma of a CPS case without proper advocacy to guide their course. At the root of this problem are structural deficiencies in the appointed legal representation system, including insufficient funding and lack of oversight.

Measurable Objective: Multi-disciplinary collaborative meetings, increased data collection and sharing, development of resources and training, training events, and engagement in collaborative efforts.

Timeframe: 10/01/11 – 09/30/12

Funding Stream: Basic

Strategic Category: All

- Capacity Building
- Court Function Improvement
- Systemic Reform

Project Activities	Anticipated Outputs and Results of Activities	Data Source for Evaluation (CQI Element)	Feedback (CQI Element)	Progress Toward Outputs and Activities	Collaboration
Establish or identify a better method of system of providing legal representation to children, parents and the child welfare agency:	Legislative changes identified and implemented, training materials and resources developed for attorneys and courts, state and local policy and practice changes, changes incorporated into Attorney Ad Litem Practice Manual and CPS Judges Bench Book and training events developed in collaboration with State	The Children’s Commission Legal Representation Study, which can be found on Children’s Commission website at www.supreme.courts.state.tx.us Commission solicited feedback about the ACP from about 400 Texas judges other stakeholders, a Jurist in	The LRS Report has been shared with Commissioners, Collaborative Council Members, Committee Members and hundreds of other interested stakeholders, and CPS judges. Minutes of subcommittee meetings will provide some data as	The Children's Commission created a 30-member multidisciplinary LRS Workgroup in 2011 to implement the study's recommendations. The LRS Workgroup met several times during FY 2012 to develop a plan that would afford due process, timely and meaningful court hearings, and high-	DFPS, Texas Governor’s Office, Texas state legislators, Texas County and District Judges, Texas Regional Presiding Judges, County Commissioner Courts, State Bar of Texas, University of Texas School of Law, Texas Judicial Council, Texas CASA, Texans Care for Children, TexProtects, Disability Rights, Inc., Texas Association of

	<p>Bar and other organizations.</p>	<p>Residence letter from Judge John Specia describing the ACP was also emailed</p> <p>Although survey respondents largely agreed on the need for improved quality in legal representation, several respondents said they considered the proposal to be unworkable in their rural jurisdictions that have small pools of eligible attorneys. As part of the CQI process, after receiving this feedback, the LRS workgroup will reassess this strategy.</p>	<p>to project objectives and outcomes.</p> <p>Recommendations will be proposed and feedback from stakeholders solicited</p> <p>All information will be shared with DFPS and other stakeholders as it is all public information.</p>	<p>quality legal advocacy.</p> <p>Children’s Commission staff and Commission members also made several presentations to various groups in FY2012 including: Judicial College for Advanced Studies, Advanced Family Law Child Abuse and Neglect Conference, Texas Association of Counties Legislative Conference.</p> <p>Drafted an Appointment of Counsel Plan for county and district courts that addressed many of the study's recommendations, including 1) the timing and duration of attorney appointments, 2) compensation and expenses related to representation, 3) training (initial and ongoing) required to qualify for and continue to receive appointments, 4) standards of representation for attorneys and performance</p> <p>Other elements of the work that may result in reforms include clarification that counties may establish a Public Defender (PD) or Managed Assigned</p>	<p>District and County Attorneys, Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid.</p>
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				<p>Counsel (MAC) office or contract with a legal-aid office or local bar section for legal representation, and also that counties can establish special prosecution units within the county or a region of the state.</p> <p>Other statutory changes may include placing additional duties on DFPS and the judge to advise parents that they are entitled to a court appointed attorney if they are indigent and opposed to the suit for termination or conservatorship.</p> <p>There may be legislation filed aimed at explicitly limiting the duties of attorneys ad litem who are appointed to represent parents cited by publication. There may be legislation filed to create an ongoing, annual legal education requirement.</p> <p>In 2013, the LRS Workgroup will continue to examine whether compensation can be reformed at a statewide level through state-provided funding or another source, rather than the current system which pays attorneys</p>	
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				<p>solely from county funds. Another issue related to compensation is whether counties should be required to publish a clear list of expenses that are reimbursable. LRS Workgroup members will also continue to work on the issue of building and implementing a statewide information and bill tracking system to track, report, and analyze attorney time spent on cases and dollars paid by the county.</p> <p>The LRS Workgroup believes that attorney standards would help ensure high-quality representation, but further discussion is needed before defining standards and deciding who will draft them, and what level of support from LRS Workgroup and Commission members the effort will require.</p>	
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Narrative Description:

The Children's Commission created a 30-member multidisciplinary LRS Workgroup in 2011 to implement the study's recommendations. The LRS Workgroup met several times during FY 2012 to develop a plan that would afford due process, timely and meaningful court hearings, and high-quality legal advocacy. Children's Commission staff and Commission members also made several presentations to various groups in FY2012 including: Judicial College for Advanced Studies, Advanced Family Law Child Abuse and Neglect Conference, Texas Association of Counties Legislative Conference.

Appointment of Council Plan: Judge Dean Rucker and Children's Commission Staff developed a comprehensive Appointment of Counsel Plan (ACP) for county and district courts that addressed many of the study's recommendations, including 1) the timing and duration of attorney appointments, 2) compensation and expenses related to representation, 3) training (initial and ongoing) required to qualify for and continue to receive appointments, 4) standards of representation for attorneys and performance evaluation. To solicit feedback about the ACP from Texas judges other stakeholders, a Jurist in Residence letter from Judge John Specia describing the ACP was emailed to some 400 stakeholders. The JIR letter included a link to the proposed ACP and a link to a short online survey that asked for feedback. Although survey respondents largely agreed on the need for improved quality in legal representation, several respondents said they considered the proposal to be unworkable in their rural jurisdictions that have small pools of eligible attorneys. As part of the CQI process, after receiving this feedback, the LRS workgroup will reassess this strategy.

Other elements of the work that may result in reforms include clarification that counties may establish a Public Defender (PD) or Managed Assigned Counsel (MAC) office or contract with a legal-aid office or local bar section for legal representation, and also that counties can establish special prosecution units within the county or a region of the state. Also, statutory changes may include placing additional duties on DFPS and the judge to advise parents that they are entitled to a court appointed attorney if they are indigent and opposed to the suit for termination or conservatorship. There may be legislation filed aimed at explicitly limiting the duties of attorneys ad litem who are appointed to represent parents cited by publication. There may be legislation filed to create an ongoing, annual legal education requirement.

In 2013, the LRS Workgroup will continue to examine whether compensation can be reformed at a statewide level through state-provided funding or another source, rather than the current system which pays attorneys solely from county funds. Another issue related to compensation is whether counties should be required to publish a clear list of expenses that are reimbursable. LRS Workgroup members will also continue to work on the issue of building and implementing a statewide information and bill tracking system to track, report, and analyze attorney time spent on cases and dollars paid by the county.

The LRS Workgroup believes that attorney standards would help ensure high-quality representation, but further discussion is needed before defining standards and deciding who will draft them, and what level of support from LRS Workgroup and Commission members the effort will require.

Outcome #1: Practice changes, expansion of knowledge, skills and attitudes as well as behaviors and capacity of child welfare stakeholders and the local child welfare system. Parents involved with child protective services will access substance abuse treatment; Parents will receive support in complying with their treatment plan; and Long-term treatment outcomes for parents graduating from the FDTC will be achieved through after-care treatment plan that will enable them to continue to reduce relapse and maintain sobriety.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: A large majority of the CPS cases in Webb County involve substance abuse. Parents need help with accessing substance abuse treatment and they need support to help them comply with their case plan, which helps preserve family relationships, promotes timely reunification or permanency of another type for the children involved, and provides enhanced engagement in the court review process.

Measurable Objective: Participants and Grant Recipient will provide information to family regarding family drug court and be given the option to voluntarily participate, families will participate in the development of their treatment plan, actively participate in services designed to help bring about reunification, participate in court review process. Collect data and share information.

Timeframe: 10/01/11 – 09/30/12

Funding Stream: Basic

Strategic Category: All

- Capacity Building Court Function Improvement Systemic Reform

Projects Activities	Anticipated Outputs and Results of Activities	Data Source for Evaluation (CQI Element)	Feedback (CQI Element)	Progress Toward Outputs and Activities	Collaboration
Establish eligibility criteria to identify parents and referral system for access to substance abuse treatment Provide screening, assessment and	Parents will enter and complete substance abuse treatment and will reunify with their children or find other permanent homes in a timely manner. Safety, permanency and wellbeing will be	Parents will sign a release of information form for collection of data involving participation in treatment. An MOU between Webb County FDTC and DFPS	All data collected will be compiled in an annual program report, which will be made available to all stakeholders. The Children’s Commission has various avenues for soliciting and submitting feedback	25 parents of 48 children were referred to the FDTC and accepted into the program. Five graduated from the program, and of the eight who are still in the program, five were on target and scheduled to	Serving Children and Adolescents in Need (SCAN), South Texas Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (STCADA), City of Webb County Health Department, Border Region MHMR, Court

<p>treatment planning</p> <p>Require weekly attendance in family drug court</p> <p>Provide participants with ongoing, comprehensive continuum of substance abuse treatment, outpatient services, random drug testing</p> <p>Provide weekly contact and monitoring</p> <p>Provide assessment of safety and viability of reunification</p> <p>Provide access to support groups to prevent relapse and maintain sobriety.</p> <p>Provide linkage services and referral to parents graduating from family drug treatment court to improve wellness and quality of life for themselves and their children.</p>	<p>enhanced due to the increased protective capacity of the parent participants</p> <p>The parent will avoid future involvement with the child welfare system</p>	<p>provides monthly aggregate data on the variables of placement changes, time in and out-of-care, and reunification for cases involved in drug court.</p> <p>Webb County has before and after FDTC county-wide permanency data.</p> <p>The Coordinator will also conduct qualitative interviews with the parents who participated in the FDTC.</p>	<p>from child welfare stakeholders</p> <p>All information will be shared with DFPS and other stakeholders as it is all public information.</p>	<p>graduate on December 8, 2012.</p> <p>12 were dropped for either non-compliance or because their other mental health problems could not be stabilized to allow them to continue the program.</p> <p>Of the 48 children whose parents were part of the program, eight were reunited with their family, 11 will be reunited when their parents graduate from the program December 2012</p> <p>Nine parents are still working the program.</p> <p>Eighteen children of the 12 parents who were dropped from the program remain in the child welfare system.</p>	<p>Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Voz de Niños, DFPS, Children's Commission, Webb County District Judges.</p>
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Narrative Description:

During the grant year, 25 parents of 48 children were referred to the FDTC and accepted into the program. Of the 25 parents, five graduated from the program, and of the eight who are still in the program, five were on target and scheduled to graduate on December 8, 2012. Of the 25 parents who began the program, 12 were dropped for either non-compliance or because their other mental health problems could not be stabilized to allow them to continue the program. Of the 48 children whose parents were part of the program, eight were reunited with their family, 11 will be reunited when their parents graduate from the program December 2012, and nine children's parents are still working the program. Eighteen children of the 12 parents who were dropped from the program remain in the child welfare system.

Outcome #1: Bench Book published, updated and content added, and also made available to all judges hearing CPS cases, and to all new judges taking bench on January 1st following election years. Also available online for use on the bench or when paper / hard copy is not available or useful.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: Judges need online and printed materials that provide access to statutory requirements, checklists, practice tips, and case law to enhance their ability to handle child protection cases, ensure due process for all parties appearing before the court, conduct timely and complete hearings, and demand and recognize high-level legal representation.

Measurable Objective: Promoting use of bench book at conferences, sending all CPS judges letter from Jurist In Residence about bench book and how to use it, monitoring use of bench book through Google Analytics.

Timeframe: 10/01/11 – 09/30/12

Funding Stream: Basic

Strategic Category: All

- Capacity Building Court Function Improvement Systemic Reform

Project Activities	Anticipated Outputs and Results of Activities	Data Source for Evaluation (CQI Element)	Feedback (CQI Element)	Progress Toward Outputs and Activities	Collaboration
Provide Texas judges handling CPS cases access to an online Bench Book	Judges will use better and best practices in handling CPS cases	<p>CC will send a survey to judges about their interest and willingness to use the bench book.</p> <p>CC will continue to review the weekly Google Analytics report for usage.</p> <p>Online access to the Bench Book has been available through TCJ since late 2010 and through OCA since early</p>	<p>All data collected will be compiled in an annual program report, which will be made available to all stakeholders.</p> <p>The Children’s Commission has various avenues for soliciting and submitting feedback from child welfare stakeholders.</p>	Because Google analytics show that usage of the Bench Book continues to be low despite marketing efforts, the Children’s Commission published a printed, updated version in Fy2012. The updated version included legislative changes and additional topics such as psychotropic medications, trauma-informed care, and	DFPS, CASA, District and Associate Judges, Texas Center for the Judiciary, Texas Office of Court Administration.

		<p>2012. This is the third and final year of the contract with Lexis. The plan is to convert all links to the free service through Texas Legislature Online by October 2013 when the Lexis contract ends. A limited number of Bench Books have been printed and will be provided to all new judges taking the bench in January and will be made available to all judges attending the 2013 Child Welfare Judges Conference in May.</p>	<p>All information will be shared with DFPS and other stakeholders as it is all public information.</p>	<p>Disproportionality.</p>	
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Narrative Description:

Because Google analytics show that usage of the Bench Book continues to be low despite marketing efforts, the Children’s Commission published a printed, updated version in Fy2012. The updated version included legislative changes and additional topics such as psychotropic medications, trauma-informed care, and Disproportionality. Online access to the Bench Book has been available through TCJ since late 2010 and through OCA since early 2012. This is the third and final year of the contract with Lexis. The plan is to convert all links to the free service through Texas Legislature Online by October 2013 when the Lexis contract ends. A limited number of Bench Books have been printed and will be provided to all new judges taking the bench in January and will be made available to all judges attending the 2013 Child Welfare Judges Conference in May.

Outcome #1: To promote increased knowledge and skills, changes in attitudes and behaviors through the Jurist In Residence letters, training events, and targeted interventions.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: The Jurist in Residence position was created to foster judicial leadership and promote greater expertise among child protection judges. The Commission’s JIR, Judge John Specia, has been instrumental in advancing judicial education and community collaboration across the state because he has the knowledge required to assist the state in meeting its obligations to address CFSR Round 2 issues including the importance of permanency and stability in living situations, the appropriateness of APPLA, the urgency behind reunification or other permanent placement, how to identify needs and orders services for children, parents, and caregivers. How judges can ensure that children and families are involved in their case planning and how to ensure courts demand and encourage notice to parties and engagement in the court reviews. This knowledge is shared through training events and written communiqué.

Measurable Objective: The JIR provides written materials, face-to-face consultation, and training to other judges handling child protection cases.

Timeframe: 10/01/11 – 09/30/12

Funding Stream: Basic

Strategic Category: All

- Capacity Building Court Function Improvement Systemic Reform

Project Activities	Anticipated Outputs and Results of Activities	Data Source for Evaluation (CQI Element)	Feedback (CQI Element)	Progress Toward Outputs and Activities	Collaboration
Judicial expertise and consultation to Texas judges handling child protection cases	Judges will use better and best practices in handling CPS cases	The JIR receives feedback from judges who receive the JIR letters and other JIR services	The JIR shares the information with the Children’s Commission which in turn shares with other judges, adjusts the JIR program, or disseminates the information as appropriate.	Judge Specia used his leadership and communications skills in FY2012 to further collaboration on several projects. Judge Specia led a multidisciplinary team that began an ongoing	All Children’s Commission collaborative partners, including but not limited to: A World For Children Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas Austin Children’s Shelter Bexar County Child

				<p>permanency project in Harris County, Texas' largest county.</p> <p>He has been a valued facilitator and speaker at most Commission-sponsored multi-disciplinary round table discussions and judicial training conferences.</p> <p>In December 2012 he resigned his JIR position because he has been appointed the Commissioner of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.</p> <p>In FY2012 the Commission published JIR newsletters on free online training for parent attorneys, CPS staff realignment after the 82nd Legislative Session, new appellate rules applicable to parental termination cases, DFPS subpoena policy, training scholarship announcements, court hearing practices and court costs, and OCA's Spanish interpreter program for CPS cases.</p> <p>Also in FY2012 Senior District Judge Robin Sage (ret.), became the second jurist in residence and Regional Presiding Judge</p>	<p>Welfare Board Center for Public Policy Priorities Child Representation Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas DePelchin Children's Center Disabilities Disability Rights Texas Educate Texas Greater Texas Community Partners Lone Star Legal Aid Office of the Attorney General Parent Guidance Center Seedling's Promise Mentor Program Texans Care For Children Texas Appleseed Texas Association of Workforce Boards Texas Council of Child Welfare Boards Texas Council on Family Violence Texas Foster Family Association Texas Juvenile Justice Department Texas Lawyers for Children Texas Office of Developmental TexProtects The Charles A. Dana Center The Faith Connection Travis County Office of Travis County Office of Parental Representation TX Association of Infant Mental Health</p>
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				Dean Rucker will be the third. Judges Sage and Rucker have many years experience hearing CPS cases and, like Judge Specia, have both been involved with CIP grant activities since the grant's inception.	TX Dept. of Family & Protective Svcs. TX Dept. of State Health Services UT Health Sciences Center at San Antonio UT School of Law William B. Connolly & Associates William Wayne Justice Center for Public Interest Law
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Narrative Description:

Judge Specia used his leadership and communications skills in FY2012 to further collaboration on several projects. He led a multidisciplinary team that began an ongoing permanency project in Harris County, Texas' largest county. He has been a valued facilitator and speaker at most Commission-sponsored multi-disciplinary round table discussions and judicial training conferences. In December 2012 he will resign his JIR position because he has been appointed the Commissioner of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

In FY2012, the Commission published JIR newsletters on free online training for parent attorneys, CPS staff realignment after the 82nd Legislative Session, new appellate rules applicable to parental termination cases, DFPS subpoena policy, training scholarship announcements, court hearing practices and court costs, and OCA's Spanish interpreter program for CPS cases.

In FY2012, Senior District Judge Robin Sage (ret.), became the second jurist in residence and Regional Presiding Judge Dean Rucker will be the third. Judges Sage and Rucker have many years experience hearing CPS cases and, like Judge Specia, have both been involved with CIP grant activities since the grant's inception.

Outcome #1: To produce increased knowledge, changes in attitudes and behaviors, and changes to child welfare policy, legislation, and judicial practices.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: Round 2 of CFSR identified needs and services of child, parents, foster parents; child and family involvement in case planning and ensuring that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care are notified of review hearings and have an opportunity to be heard in the review hearings. The RT events assist in the development of agency policy, planned legislative changes, and improved judicial practices aimed at ameliorating the issues identified in CFSR Round 2.

Measurable Objective: Round Tables reports that include recommendations which result in the formation of workgroups, legislative, policy and practice changes. Inform judicial and child welfare stakeholder training.

Timeframe: 10/01/11 – 09/30/12

Funding Stream: Basic

Strategic Category: All

- Capacity Building Court Function Improvement Systemic Reform

Project Activities	Anticipated Outputs and Results of Activities	Data Source for Evaluation (CQI Element)	Feedback (CQI Element)	Progress Toward Outputs and Activities	Collaboration
Collaborative meetings that bring together subject matter experts, judicial and executive branch leaders, and key policy-makers to discuss issues affecting child protection in the State of Texas	Participants are more aware / more educated about certain issues that come up in the Round Table meetings	The Children’s Commission solicits feedback from child welfare stakeholders through its collaborative council, judges, commissioners, committee members, and child welfare collaborative partners.	The Children’s Commission shares all information and reports with the Children’s Commission, and all child welfare stakeholders in Texas through its website, quarterly and annual reports, and other reports and articles regarding its work that	Two Round Tables were conducted in FY 2012. CPS Budget Constraints: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The November 2011 Round Table co-hosted with Casey Family Programs and CPS, approximately 40 multi-disciplinary participants discussed the impact of FY 2012-2013 	All Children’s Commission collaborative partners, including but not limited to: A World For Children Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas Austin Children’s Shelter Bexar County Child Welfare Board Center for Public Policy Priorities

			<p>are produced throughout the year.</p>	<p>state budget limitations, strategies for best utilizing limited funding, and available resources to achieve optimal results of safe and timely permanency. Participants discussed how CPS assesses families and works with community providers, noting that assessments are sometimes duplicative and rely too heavily on self reporting. Issues concerning CPS-required services were discussed as well, including their over-assignment, the long waiting periods and other difficulties families have accessing them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychotropic Medication Round Table. In July 2012, 50 participants discussed the Consent Process, Judicial Review, and the Psychoactive Medication Parameters. The participants reviewed current statutes, policies, and practices surrounding the use 	<p>Child Representation Children’s Advocacy Centers of Texas DePelchin Children’s Center Disabilities Disability Rights Texas Educate Texas Greater Texas Community Partners Lone Star Legal Aid Office of the Attorney General Parent Guidance Center Seedling's Promise Mentor Program Texans Care For Children Texas Appleseed Texas Association of Workforce Boards Texas Council of Child Welfare Boards Texas Council on Family Violence Texas Foster Family Association Texas Juvenile Justice Department Texas Lawyers for Children Texas Office of Developmental TexProtects The Charles A. Dana Center The Faith Connection Travis County Office of Travis County Office of Parental Representation TX Association of Infant Mental Health TX Dept. of Family & Protective Svcs. TX Dept. of State Health</p>
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				of psychoactive medications, offering their expertise and insights from the field regarding what are working well and what is not.	Services UT Health Sciences Center at San Antonio UT School of Law William B. Connolly & Associates William Wayne Justice Center for Public Interest Law
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Narrative Description:

Two Round Tables were conducted in FY 2012. CPS Budget Constraints: The November 2011 Round Table co-hosted with Casey Family Programs and CPS, approximately 40 multi-disciplinary participants discussed the impact of FY 2012-2013 state budget limitations, strategies for best utilizing limited funding, and available resources to achieve optimal results of safe and timely permanency. Participants discussed how CPS assesses families and works with community providers, noting that assessments are sometimes duplicative and rely too heavily on self reporting. Issues concerning CPS-required services were discussed as well, including their over-assignment, the long waiting periods and other difficulties families have accessing them. Click here to see the Round Table report: <http://texaschildrenscommission.gov/PDF/BudgetReport.pdf>

Psychotropic Medications: In July 2012, 50 participants discussed the Consent Process, Judicial Review, and the Psychoactive Medication Parameters. The participants reviewed current statutes, policies, and practices surrounding the use of psychoactive medications, offering their expertise and insights from the field regarding what are working well and what is not. Click here to access the Children’s Commission Website for the report: <http://texaschildrenscommission.gov/resources.htm>

Outcome #1: Judiciary will be able to understand what certain data says about their judicial practices and jurisdictional performance on measures dealing with safety, permanency and well-being, but primarily permanency.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: Judges need to understand the importance of achieving timely permanency for children, how to assess the appropriateness of an APPLA, how to structure a case and a process that brings about timely adoption consummation, how to understand the needs of a family and to order services to address their needs, and how to ensure notice and engagement of children and families is carried out in a meaningful way. Understanding data behind permanency outcomes will help judges use practices that promote more timely permanency for children and help them hold other stakeholders accountable for doing their part to also ensure timely permanency.

Measurable Objective: Data will help identify specific problem areas on which courts can or should focus their efforts and give courts a tool to initiate a conversation with the child welfare agency, attorneys, advocates and other stakeholders about possible systemic problems and ways to collaborate to improve child permanency, well-being and safety. Judges are critical decision-makers in the child welfare system and must be conversant with certain data to effectively participate in policy discussions and, in some cases, to respond to critiques about judicial performance.

Timeframe: 10/01/11 – 09/30/12

Funding Stream: Basic

Strategic Category: All

- Capacity Building Court Function Improvement Systemic Reform

Project Activities	Anticipated Outputs and Results of Activities	Data Source for Evaluation	Feedback (CQI Element)	Progress Toward Outputs and Activities	Collaboration
Presentations, Report Preparation and Meeting Assistance for judges from judicial subject matter experts to help evaluate a jurisdiction's	Judges hearing CPS cases will receive assistance to help them understand the importance of achieving timely permanency for children,	Permanency and other outcome data from the Child Welfare SACWIS	The Children's Commission shares all information and reports with the Children's Commission, and all child welfare stakeholders in	This project has been focused on Harris County since it was originally conceived after an April 2010 judicial "Beyond the Bench" conference and an October 2010 report	All Children's Commission collaborative partners, including but not limited to: A World For Children Alabama-Coushatta Tribe

<p>performance on permanency outcomes as measured by the DFPS data collected pursuant to federal requirements.</p>	<p>how to assess the appropriateness of an APPLA, how to structure a case and a process that brings about timely adoption consummation, how to understand the needs of a family and to order services to address their needs, and how to ensure notice and engagement of children and families is carried out in a meaningful way.</p>		<p>Texas through its website, quarterly and annual reports, and other reports and articles regarding its work that are produced throughout the year.</p>	<p>on children in long-term foster care, published by Texas Appleseed, helped shed light on key issues affecting Harris County. As a result of these findings, state and county judicial leaders expressed interest in finding workable solutions to improve court processes and judicial practices in managing its child-protection cases. The issues identified included case delays, accountability and preparation, service of citation and notice, low reunification rate, lack of permanency, Disproportionality, case management and docketing, legal fees for appointed attorneys, countywide oversight and cooperation. Because Harris County makes up such a significant portion of the Texas population, what happens in Harris County affects the state's overall performance in the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR). In December 2011, Justice Guzman asked Harris County District Judges Judy Warne, Bonnie Hellums, David Farr, and Michael Schneider for their help in leading efforts to implement</p>	<p>of Texas Austin Children's Shelter Bexar County Child Welfare Board Center for Public Policy Priorities Child Representation Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas DePelchin Children's Center Disabilities Disability Rights Texas Educate Texas Greater Texas Community Partners Lone Star Legal Aid Office of the Attorney General Parent Guidance Center Seedling's Promise Mentor Program Texans Care For Children Texas Appleseed Texas Association of Workforce Boards Texas Council of Child Welfare Boards Texas Council on Family Violence Texas Foster Family Association Texas Juvenile Justice Department Texas Lawyers for Children Texas Office of Developmental TexProtects The Charles A. Dana Center The Faith Connection Travis County Office of Travis County Office of</p>
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				<p>more effective processes and protocols to help produce better outcomes for children and families served by the Harris County child protection system.</p> <p>Eight Harris County district judges and seven associate judges met on January 13, 2012, again in March and May 2012 to discuss how the juvenile and family judges can work together to address some of the legal and child welfare system barriers that are contributing to the delays in foster youth exiting the system. Children's Commissioner Justice Michael Massengale, and Senior District Judge John Specia, ret., are serving as advisors to the group, whose work has garnered interest among other local judges. Children's Commission partner, Texas Appleseed has taken over the project management of this particular initiative.</p> <p>The outputs anticipated at the beginning of the year were not produced because the partnership between the Children's Commission and the Center for Public Policy Priorities was amended due to staff changes at CPPP.</p>	<p>Parental Representation TX Association of Infant Mental Health TX Dept. of Family & Protective Svcs. TX Dept. of State Health Services UT Health Sciences Center at San Antonio UT School of Law William B. Connolly & Associates William Wayne Justice Center for Public Interest Law</p>
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Narrative Description:

This project as it was originally conceived after an April 2010 judicial “Beyond the Bench” conference and an October 2010 report on children in long-term foster care, published by Texas Appleseed, helped shed light on key issues affecting Harris County. As a result of these findings, state and county judicial leaders expressed interest in finding workable solutions to improve court processes and judicial practices in managing its child-protection cases. The issues identified included case delays, accountability and preparation, service of citation and notice, low reunification rate, lack of permanency, Disproportionality, case management and docketing, legal fees for appointed attorneys, countywide oversight and cooperation. Read the final report here: <http://www.supreme.courts.state.tx.us/children.asp>. Additionally, because Harris County makes up such a significant portion of the Texas population, what happens in Harris County affects the state’s overall performance in the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR).

In December 2011, Justice Guzman asked Harris County District Judges Judy Warne, Bonnie Hellums, David Farr, and Michael Schneider for their help in leading efforts to implement more effective processes and protocols to help produce better outcomes for children and families served by the Harris County child protection system. Eight Harris County district judges and seven associate judges met on January 13, 2012, again in March and May 2012 to discuss how the juvenile and family judges can work together to address some of the legal and child welfare system barriers that are contributing to the delays in foster youth exiting the system. Children's Commissioner Justice Michael Massengale, and Senior District Judge John Specia, ret., are serving as advisors to the group, whose work has garnered interest among other local judges. Children’s Commission partner, Texas Appleseed has taken over the project management of this particular initiative.

The outputs anticipated at the beginning of the year were not produced because the partnership between the Children’s Commission and the Center for Public Policy Priorities was amended due to staff changes at CPPP.

Outcome #1: Help raise awareness and understanding of racial disproportionality among judges and key stakeholders involved in the legal system by developing and promoting judicial and attorney training applying tools designed to reduce institutional racism and bias, identifying and providing technical assistance regarding statewide and for jurisdiction-specific disproportionality data, and connecting judges with expert trainers for community-based workshops if they wish to expand the training into their communities and local partners.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: According to the NCJFCJ’s 2011 Report, Right From the Start: The CCC Preliminary Protective Hearing Benchcard Study Report, research has demonstrated that racial disparities exist within the juvenile dependency system concerning the reported allegations, specifically against African Americans. There is evidence that before a case reaches court, African American children are more likely than other children to be referred to protective services and to have allegations of abuse and neglect substantiated. Further, African American children are more likely to be removed from their homes than children of other racial or ethnic backgrounds and are more likely to be placed in foster care than other children are. African -American children also are more likely to stay longer in foster care; receive fewer services while in care; and are less likely to be reunified with their family than children from other racial and ethnic groups.

Measurable Objective: Child Welfare Judges and attorneys will gain knowledge and skills, use suggested resources and tools, and, if interested, continue the work at a local level by sponsoring town hall meetings, workshops and/or court practice.

Timeframe: 10/01/11 – 09/30/12

Funding Stream: Basic

Strategic Category: All

- Capacity Building Court Function Improvement Systemic Reform

Project Activities	Anticipated Outputs and Results of Activities	Data Source for Evaluation (CQI Element)	Feedback (CQI Element)	Progress Toward Outputs and Activities	Collaboration
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JDW strategy meetings	Develop strategies to transform judicial and attorney practice to eliminate disparate outcomes for children and families of color.	JDW and Texas Center for the Judiciary will evaluate quantitative and qualitative measures by tracking percentage of child welfare judges reached by Disproportionality training and evidence of changed practices and better outcomes.	The JDW and the Texas Center for the Judiciary will share the feedback with the JDW and other child welfare stakeholders as needed and appropriate.	The JDW met in May 2012 to discuss supporting the annual Implicit Bias conference, regional workshops and efforts to include disproportionality at other conferences.	The Children's Commission; Casey Family Programs; the Center for the Elimination of Disproportionality and Disparities; Interagency Council on Disproportionality and Disparities; NCJFCJ.
Implicit Bias Conference	Educate and motivate child welfare judges to evaluate each case through a lens of anti-racism.	Participants will complete an evaluation regarding knowledge gained and next steps.	The Texas Center for the Judiciary will share the feedback with the JDW and other child welfare stakeholders as needed and appropriate.	A number of Texas CPS judges have become actively engaged in understanding and undoing racism. Some have brought workshops into their courts and communities similar to the Undoing Racism conference. Judge Meca Walker hosted an Undoing Racism Workshop in August 2012 in Houston that brought together many Harris County child welfare stakeholders who appear in her court for a two and a half day workshop exploring institutional racism and how systems affect individuals.	

<p>Liaison to the statutorily-created Interagency Council For Addressing Disproportionality</p>	<p>Represent the judicial and legal perspective in this high-level, multi-agency collaboration</p>	<p>The Interagency Council has been charged by the Texas Legislature to examine the level of disproportionate involvement of children who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group at each stage in the juvenile justice, child welfare, education, and mental health systems.</p>	<p>The Interagency Council will report to the Legislature in December 2012.</p>	<p>The Texas legislature created the Center for the Elimination of Disproportionality and Disparities (CEDD) in 2011 to address health disparities in programs administered by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission. The legislature also created the <u>Interagency Council for Addressing Disproportionality</u> and charged its members with developing recommendations in a report due December 2012. Tina Amberboy, Children's Commission executive director, was appointed to this high-level multidisciplinary group to represent judicial and legal perspectives.</p>	
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Narrative Description:

A number of Texas CPS judges have become actively engaged in understanding and undoing racism. Some have brought workshops into their courts and communities similar to the Undoing Racism conference. Judge Meca Walker hosted an Undoing Racism Workshop in August 2012 in Houston that brought together many Harris County child welfare stakeholders who appear in her court for a two and a half day workshop exploring institutional racism and how systems affect individuals. The JDW met in May 2012 to discuss supporting the annual Implicit Bias conference, regional workshops and efforts to include disproportionality at other conferences.

The Texas legislature created the Center for the Elimination of Disproportionality and Disparities (CEDD) in 2011 to address health disparities in programs administered by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission. The legislature also created the Interagency Council for Addressing Disproportionality and charged its members with developing recommendations in a report due December 2012. Tina Amberboy, Children's Commission executive director, was appointed to this high-level multidisciplinary group to represent judicial and legal perspectives.

Outcome #1: Judges and attorneys will become familiar with the Psychotropic Medication Utilization Parameters for Foster Children. Improved court practices will provide another layer of oversight in the use of psychoactive medications for children in foster care.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: According to the December 2011 report from the United States General Accountability Office, foster children in Florida, Massachusetts, Michigan, Oregon, and Texas were prescribed psychotropic drugs at rates 2.7 to 4.5 times higher than non-foster children in Medicaid in 2008. In 2011, the Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families (Children’s Commission) was asked by members of the Collaborative Council to examine how judges, the child welfare agency, and other advocates and interested persons could work together to further decrease the use of psychotropic medications in Texas’ foster youth. The Children’s Commission formed a multi-disciplinary workgroup (the Workgroup) led by Judge Diane Guariglia, Associate Judge from the 245th District Court in Harris County and Dr. James Rogers, Medical Director at the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), to study the processes of how consent for the medications was given, how vital information was shared between the consenters and prescribers, and to identify gaps in oversight, consultation, and information-sharing.

Measurable Objective: The Parameters have reduced the use of psychotropic medication by 31% overall, and decreases will continue in the overall use of psychotropic medications and in the use of multiple medications for the same purpose. Judges and other stakeholders will exercise more oversight and accountability.

Timeframe: 10/01/11 – 09/30/12

Funding Stream: Basic

Strategic Category: All

- Capacity Building
- Court Function Improvement
- Systemic Reform

Project Activities	Anticipated Outputs and Results of Activities	Data Source for Evaluation (CQI Element)	Feedback (CQI Element)	Progress Toward Outputs and Activities	Collaboration

<p>Psych Meds Workgroup</p>	<p>Promote use of the Parameters to judges, attorneys, caseworkers, volunteers, and providers;</p> <p>Explore an intermediate process where parties could inquire about medications without making a referral for a full PMUR; Make recommendations regarding a plan to regularly update and/or supplement the Parameters with information on new medications and medications which have not been FDA approved; and consider how the informed consent process and the foster care redesign will affect the PMUR process.</p>	<p>Judges, attorneys, advocates, mental health workers will be interviewed to gather baseline data to measure the level of satisfaction and trust felt among the users of the Parameters. DFPS also collects detailed information about the number of children on medications and the trends of these prescriptions.</p> <p>Please see Progress Section for information about how data and feedback was used</p>	<p>The PMW will share feedback with the Children’s Commission and other child welfare stakeholders as needed and appropriate</p>	<p>Treatment parameters, called Psychotropic Medication Utilization Parameters (Parameters) were created in 2005 to encourage the appropriate use of psychotropic medications in foster children. The Parameters have been considered successful, leading to a significant reduction (31%) in the overall use of psychotropic medications and decreases in the use of multiple medications for the same purpose. However, some judges and stakeholders continued to encounter lingering cases where the Parameters have not provided enough of a safety net or the system was not responsive enough for these children.</p> <p>After receiving feedback regarding concerns about psychoactive medications, the Children’s Commission formed the Psychoactive Medication Workgroup (PMW), which has sought to improve practices and communication, gain a better understanding of the Parameter review process, and identify</p>	<p>STAR Health, DFPS, Texas CASA and other collaborative council members including, but not limited to, A World For Children Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas Austin Children’s Shelter Bexar County Child Welfare Board Center for Public Policy Priorities Child Representation Children’s Advocacy Centers of Texas DePelchin Children’s Center Disabilities Disability Rights Texas Educate Texas Greater Texas Community Partners Lone Star Legal Aid Office of the Attorney General Parent Guidance Center Seedling’s Promise Mentor Program Texans Care For Children Texas Appleseed Texas Association of Workforce Boards Texas Council of Child Welfare Boards Texas Council on Family Violence Texas Foster Family Association Texas Juvenile Justice Department Texas Lawyers for Children Texas Office of</p>
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				<p>possible gaps and solutions in this system. In early July 2012, the Commission co-hosted a Round Table meeting on Judicial Practices in the Oversight of Psychoactive Medications and Texas Children in Foster Care. The Round Table brought together judges, child psychiatrists, STAR Health and DFPS leadership, as well as other subject matter experts, for an all-day discussion of how judges handling CPS cases can exercise informed and appropriate oversight of the medications being prescribed to the children in their courts.</p> <p>The Report on the Psychoactive Medications Round Table includes recommendations aimed at three main areas: medical / informed consent, judicial review, and the Psychotropic Medication Utilization Review (PMUR). Based on the work of the Psych Meds workgroup, the Round Table conducted in July and feedback received subsequent to the July meeting the report will suggest ways to improve training tools, increase awareness and education of all stakeholders to improve</p>	<p>Developmental TexProtects The Charles A. Dana Center The Faith Connection Travis County Office of Travis County Office of Parental Representation TX Association of Infant Mental Health TX Dept. of Family & Protective Svcs. TX Dept. of State Health Services UT Health Sciences Center at San Antonio UT School of Law William B. Connolly & Associates William Wayne Justice Center for Public Interest Law</p>
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				<p>participation in medical appointments, heighten judicial awareness and education to improve accountability during hearings, and the development of tools and practices to help consider and eliminate non-pharmacological interventions before resorting to the use of psychoactive medications.</p>	
<p>Pilot Project: Judiciary Medication Information Project</p>	<p>The primary goal of the Judiciary Medication Information Project is to answer general questions regarding medications. For security reasons, the requests at this time cannot identify a specific child; however, the questions can be tailored in such as way to protect confidentiality, while asking pointed questions</p>	<p>STAR Health will monitor the volume and usage of the Medication Information Project</p> <p>STAR has not reported numbers. CIP did not invest any funds in this particular effort.</p>	<p>STAR Health will solicit feedback and adjust the processes as necessary before inviting all members of the Judiciary to participate.</p>	<p>Another tool implemented in 2012 to improve information-sharing is the Judicial Medication Information Email Box which allows judges to submit a request for general medication information. Emails are reviewed by a STAR Health Behavioral Health Service Manager, who has support from the STAR Health Behavioral Health Medical Director (child psychiatrist), the STAR Health Pharmacist and clinical managers. STAR Health also maintains a 24/7 Behavioral Health hotline with access to behavioral health professionals when urgent needs arise.</p>	

Narrative Description:

Treatment parameters, called Psychotropic Medication Utilization Parameters (Parameters) were created in 2005 to encourage the appropriate use of psychotropic medications in foster children. The Parameters have been considered successful, leading to a significant reduction (31%) in the overall use of psychotropic medications and decreases in the use of multiple medications for the same purpose. However, some judges and stakeholders continued to encounter lingering cases where the Parameters have not provided enough of a safety net or the system was not responsive enough for these children.

After receiving feedback regarding concerns about psychoactive medications, the Children's Commission formed the Psychoactive Medication Workgroup (PMW), which has sought to improve practices and communication, gain a better understanding of the Parameter review process, and identify possible gaps and solutions in this system. In early July 2012, the Commission co-hosted a Round Table meeting on Judicial Practices in the Oversight of Psychoactive Medications and Texas Children in Foster Care. The Round Table brought together judges, child psychiatrists, STAR Health and DFPS leadership, as well as other subject matter experts, for an all-day discussion of how judges handling CPS cases can exercise informed and appropriate oversight of the medications being prescribed to the children in their courts.

At the Round Table, the participants discussed the independent evaluation of Texas' Parameters from national experts at Rutgers University, which recommended increased comprehensive psychosocial assessments and treatments, non-pharmacologic alternatives, and improved monitoring of children on such medications. Several participants expressed a desire to see more emphasis on non-medication alternatives, with trauma-informed, recovery-based policies to ensure these alternatives are being considered. The Report on the Psychoactive Medications Round Table is undergoing final review and includes recommendations aimed at three main areas: medical / informed consent, judicial review, and the Psychotropic Medication Utilization Review (PMUR). Based on the work of the Psych Meds workgroup, the Round Table conducted in July and feedback received subsequent to the July meeting the report will suggest ways to improve training tools, increase awareness and education of all stakeholders to improve participation in medical appointments, heighten judicial awareness and education to improve accountability during hearings, and the development of tools and practices to help consider and eliminate non-pharmacological interventions before resorting to the use of psychoactive medications.

Trauma Informed Care Workgroup (TICW)[\(Return to Project List\)](#)

Outcome #1: Further develop the Texas Child Welfare legal system into a trauma-informed system of care with new policy or processes which reflect and support a trauma-informed approach. Judges and attorneys will gain new skills and knowledge to foster an emotionally safe environment with children and families. The legal partners will work collaboratively with the entire system of care including agency staff, therapists, resource (foster/kinship) parents, residential contractors (CPA, RTC, GRO), and STAR Health. Improve effectiveness and outcomes for safety, permanency, and well-being by infusing trauma -informed practice into the system.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: “Traditional child welfare approaches to maltreatment focus largely on physical injury, the relative risk of recurrent harm, and questions of child custody, in conjunction with a criminal justice orientation. In contrast, when viewed through a child development lens, the abuse or neglect of young children should be evaluated and treated as a matter of child health and development within the context of a family relationship crisis, which requires sophisticated expertise in both early childhood and adult mental health.” (Source: Bryan Samuels, Commissioner Administration on Children, Youth and Families Promoting Social and Emotional Well-Being by Facilitating Healing and Recovery THE CRITICAL INTERPLAY OF RELATIONSHIPS AND BRAIN DEVELOPMENT, citing the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child 2004). Young Children Develop in an Environment of Relationships: Working Paper No. 1. Retrieved from www.developingchild.harvard.edu

Measurable Objective: Training of all persons in system so that they are knowledgeable and develop trauma-informed skills and will recognize trauma and its impact and be appropriately responsive to the children and the other people within the system. Establish Evidence-Based policies, training, leadership, and service practices.

Timeframe: 10/01/11 – 09/30/12

Funding Stream: Basic

Strategic Category: All

- Capacity Building Court Function Improvement Systemic Reform

Project Activities	Anticipated Outputs and Results of Activities	Data Source for Evaluation (CQI Element)	Feedback (CQI Element)	Progress Toward Outputs and Activities	Collaboration
Judicial Education	Promote a trauma-informed legal system of care is one in which all persons working in and connected to the multi-level child welfare system are knowledgeable and responsive to the individualized impacts of trauma in the lives of people served and on those serving within the system.	<p>The Texas Center for the Judiciary will survey training participants to demonstrate knowledge gained from the training regarding due process of law, and the importance of timely, thorough and complete hearings and quality legal representation</p> <p>Evaluation data is pending</p>	Share feedback with the Children’s Commission and other child welfare stakeholders as needed and appropriate.	<p>There was a presentation at the 2012 Child Welfare Judges Conference entitled:</p> <p>Creating Trauma Informed Systems</p> <p>Faculty: Judge Joan Byer and Kris Buffington</p>	DFPS, Texas Disability Rights, Texas CASA, child-placing agencies, universities, and private foundations – applicable to all activities.
Infuse Trauma-Informed Care into Judicial and Attorney Tools and Resources	<p>Encourage a trauma-informed approach which incorporates i) the child and family's story; ii) the child's developmental level; and, iii) evidence-based modalities to policies, training, leadership and service practice to:</p> <p>promote child safety and well-being;</p> <p>reduce the harmful impact abuse and neglect has on children;</p> <p>decrease traumatic experiences for children</p>	<p>CC will survey training participants to demonstrate knowledge gained from the training regarding due process of law, and the importance of timely, thorough and complete hearings and quality legal representation.</p> <p>No evaluation has occurred.</p>	The TIC Workgroup will share feedback with the Children’s Commission and other child welfare stakeholders as needed and appropriate.	The TIC Workgroup has developed a new chapter for the Child Protection Judges’ Bench Book and plans to develop more materials for judicial and attorney education.	

	<p>and their families; and</p> <p>coordinate judicial and attorney education with DFPS directives from state and federal statutes and ACF guidance:</p> <p>§264.015 Texas Family Code as amended by SB 219 (9/1/2011), Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act of 2011(P.L. 112-34) Administration on Children, Youth, and Families (ACF)</p>				
<p>Judicial Workgroup</p>	<p>This Workgroup has researched restraint policy and other important elements of a trauma-informed approach. The Commission Workgroup will collaborate with the ongoing efforts in TIC and communicate these best practices to judges and lawyers. Currently there are several stakeholders focusing on this issue with whom the Workgroup will collaborate:</p> <p>The Hogg Foundation</p>		<p>Share feedback with the Children’s Commission and other child welfare stakeholders as needed and appropriate.</p>	<p>The TIC Workgroup has been on hold as DFPS has been developing its strategic plan to integrate trauma-informed care into child protective services, representatives from the TIC Workgroup have participated in strategic planning sessions with DFPS to begin the work of making the entire Texas child welfare system more aware of and responsive to the effects of trauma on child development and mental</p>	

	<p>created an advisory committee for the implementation of a training and technical assistance program for Residential Treatment Centers and State Supported Living Centers related to restraint and seclusion reduction.</p> <p>DFPS is conducting strategic planning sessions to further develop every layer of their agency to sensitive to trauma and its effects on the children they serve. DFPS has also supported a Public Private Partnership subcommittee focused on</p> <p>Identify what facilities are doing right and what changes are needed.</p> <p>Create a self-assessment tool for facilities.</p> <p>Develop a collection of best practice recommendations for facilities.</p> <p>Training and technical assistance, focusing on products with a long shelf-life. (IMHS is already offering trauma-informed care training to</p>			<p>health.</p>	
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	<p>CPS Contractors).</p> <p>Communicate youth perspective regarding seclusion/restraint to caregivers at facilities.</p>				
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Narrative Description:

The TIC Workgroup has developed a new chapter for the Child Protection Judges’ Bench Book and plans to develop more materials for judicial and attorney education. While the TIC Workgroup has been on hold as DFPS has been developing its strategic plan to integrate trauma-informed care into child protective services, representatives from the TIC Workgroup have participated in strategic planning sessions with DFPS to begin the work of making the entire Texas child welfare system more aware of and responsive to the effects of trauma on child development and mental health.

Tribal Initiatives

[\(Return to Project List\)](#)

Outcome #1: Judges will have a solid working knowledge of the Indian Child Welfare Act, and also an understanding of why we have the Indian Child Welfare Act. It is extremely important to learn from the past in order to build a very different future in working with Native children, families, and tribes.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: Round 2 of CFSR identified issues of permanency, placement stability, long-term foster care, family relationships and continuity which would benefit from collaboration with Texas tribes. A review of the child welfare system data indicates that “across the United States, Native American children are overrepresented in foster care at a rate of 2.2 times their rate in the general population” (*Disproportionality Rates for Children of Color in Foster Care*, published by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, May 2011). Disproportionate representation of native children is also seen in Texas and demands further investigation.

Measurable Objective: Texas State courts will demonstrate collaboration with Tribes resulting in: identifying, defining and assessing CIP outcomes; developing the strategic plan; and planning how the State court will respond to CFSR and title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Review findings and participate in PIP activities related to court functioning and performance that relate to the purposes of the Act within PIP timeframes.

Timeframe: 10/01/11 – 09/30/12

Funding Stream: Basic

Strategic Category: All

Capacity Building Court Function Improvement Systemic Reform

Project Activities	Anticipated Outputs and Results of Activities	Data Source for Evaluation (CQI Element)	Feedback (CQI Element)	Progress Toward Outputs and Activities	Collaboration
Ongoing and meaningful collaboration with the	Collaboration will result in institutional and	The Children’s Commission and	The Tribal Collaboration Workgroup will share	The Children’s Commission has worked	Department of Family and Protective Services, the

<p>three federally-recognized tribal nations in Texas</p>	<p>infrastructural changes such as:</p> <p>a tribal representative will be named as a Commissioner and part of strategic planning;</p> <p>Commission will provide technical assistance with the CIP application process and the development of the first tribal model court; and</p> <p>create a Workgroup committed to the projects with the Alabama-Coushatta and to build relationships with the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo and Kickapoo Nations</p>	<p>committee members will survey tribal leadership and existing data to determine baseline for related outcomes for tribal foster children, youth and families to establish long-term goals.</p> <p>CC has been unable to ascertain any level of data or understanding of outcomes for tribal foster youth other than that known through its Disproportionality work, which has focused primarily on African American children.</p>	<p>feedback with the Children’s Commission and other child welfare stakeholders as needed and appropriate.</p>	<p>to develop collaborative relationships with Texas’ three federally recognized tribal nations. In April 2012, a small Commission-sponsored delegation that included Children’s Commission Executive Director and the DFPS Assistant Commissioner for Child Protective Services visited the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas for a signing ceremony honoring the first Tribal IV-E Agreement in Texas. This event was preceded by a Judicial Symposium that included Alabama-Coushatta Tribal judges, state court and county court judges, caseworkers, attorneys, experts from domestic violence advocacy groups and many other stakeholders.</p> <p>Commission staff also traveled to the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo reservation in El Paso to meet with representatives of the three federally-recognized tribes, state leaders in child welfare, and experts in racial disproportionality.</p> <p>In June, judges who</p>	<p>Alabama-Coushatta, the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, the Kickapoo, NCJFCJ, the Texas Center for the Judiciary, CASA.</p>
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				<p>attended the annual child welfare judges conference attended a presentation by Ms. Tanya McElfresh with the</p> <p>The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges about tribal history and culture as well as the history of ICWA and practical tips on ensuring ICWA is considered and applied appropriately in child welfare cases.</p>	
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Narrative Description:

The Children's Commission has worked to develop collaborative relationships with Texas' three federally recognized tribal nations. In April 2012, a small Commission-sponsored delegation that included Children's Commission Executive Director and the DFPS Assistant Commissioner for Child Protective Services visited the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas for a signing ceremony honoring the first Tribal IV-E Agreement in Texas. This event was preceded by a Judicial Symposium that included Alabama-Coushatta Tribal judges, state court and county court judges, caseworkers, attorneys, experts from domestic violence advocacy groups and many other stakeholders.

Commission staff traveled later in the year to the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo reservation in El Paso to meet with representatives of the three federally-recognized tribes, state leaders in child welfare, and experts in racial disproportionality. National experts introduced the idea of historical trauma, and how the past informs our current challenges. Commission staff have been connecting with members of the Alabama-Coushatta, Ysleta del Sur Pueblo and the Kickapoo tribes to gain a better understanding of how state courts and tribal courts can work together in child abuse and neglect cases.

In June, judges who attended the annual child welfare judges conference attended a presentation by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges about tribal history and culture as well as the history of ICWA and practical tips on ensuring ICWA is considered and applied appropriately in child welfare cases.

Texas Center for Judiciary (TCJ)[\(Return to Project List\)](#)

Outcome #1: Promote judicial leadership to improve the administration of justice in child protection cases.

Texas Center programming will specifically focus on the promotion of judicial leadership amongst those judges presiding over child protection cases throughout the state to improve child and family safety, permanency and well-being. The nature of child abuse and neglect cases requires a distinctive judicial process which requires specialized judicial expertise. In child welfare cases, there is also a unique interdependence between the court and external groups and organizations. Judicial leadership is required to encourage the collaboration of these external parties in order to bring about the best possible outcomes for the children and families involved in the process. This goal addresses systemic reform.

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

Due to the specialized judicial expertise required for judges hearing child protection cases, the Texas Center endeavors to make certain that our training curriculum improves judicial knowledge on best practices related to safety, permanency and well-being. In planning curriculum, staff worked extensively with the Children's Commission and other parties to identify those practices determined to be most relevant. This goal addresses improving court function.

Outcome #3: Increase judicial knowledge and expertise in the handling of child protection cases.

This goal addresses capacity building.

Outcome #3: Promote accountability for improvements in courts that are responsible for child protection cases.

This goal addresses capacity building.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: In Texas, more than 460 judges have jurisdiction to hear child protection cases in 254 counties across a staggering diversity of institutional arrangements, legal cultures, and political climates. The sheer number of child protection courts, the manner in which they are funded, and the state's large geographical size present daunting challenges to court improvement in Texas. Courts oversee all aspects of child welfare cases and judicial practices impact due process, timeliness of hearings, the quality of legal representation, as well as the safety, permanency and wellbeing of children and families throughout the case. Because of these responsibilities, it is imperative that CIP invest in judicial education, resources, and technical assistance focused on child welfare issues.

Measurable Objective: Training events, provision of judicial technical assistance and resources, and engagement in collaborative efforts.

Timeframe: 10/01/11 – 09/30/12

Funding Stream: Training

Strategic Category: All

- Capacity Building Court Function Improvement Systemic Reform

Project Activities	Anticipated Outputs and Results of Activities	Data Source for Evaluation (CQI Element)	Feedback (CQI Element)	Progress Toward Anticipated Outputs / Project Activities	Collaboration
Texas Permanency Summit	Educate judges on importance of permanency for youth in long-term foster care.	The Texas Center will survey training participants to demonstrate knowledge gained from the training regarding due process of law, and the importance of timely, thorough and complete hearings and quality legal representation.	The Texas Center will share feedback with the Children’s Commission and other child welfare stakeholders as needed and appropriate.	<p>This resulted in a Permanency Summit which was held in October 2012 (FY2013) by 17 teams of five from 16 counties plus facilitators, trainers, and staff.</p> <p>Provided insight on best practices and explore innovative solutions to promote more timely permanency for children and youth in care; Focused on improving court function through family engagement, preservation, reunification and adoption, Engaged in capacity building by increasing judicial and attorney knowledge and expertise, cross-training with multidisciplinary stakeholders and data-sharing, Promoted systemic reform by</p>	Applicable to each project: The Texas Center will collaborate with the Children’s Commission to ensure that the programs and initiatives supported by CIP identify and develop best practices to improve outcomes in child protection cases and that these are shared on a statewide level. Texas Center staff will work directly with the Commission to tailor judicial training curricula to include those practices determined to be most effective both nationwide and specific to Texas. The Texas Center will collaborate with the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) and other national organizations to facilitate attendance of Texas judges at relevant

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				<p>encouraging judicial leadership in improving permanency outcomes.</p> <p>Survey results are pending.</p>	<p>conferences and trainings. The Texas Center will collaborate with members of the Texas judiciary and child welfare stakeholders in development of curriculum for these conferences.</p>
<p>Child Welfare Judges Conference (formerly CPS/Associate Judges Conference)</p>	<p>The Texas Center held the Child Welfare Judicial Conference on June 4 – June 6 in San Antonio, TX.</p>	<p>The Texas Center will survey training participants to demonstrate knowledge gained from the training regarding due process of law, and the importance of timely, thorough and complete hearings and quality legal representation.</p> <p>Overall Program 4.65</p> <p>Lodging 5.00</p> <p>Seminar Facilities 4.82</p> <p>Usefulness of Materials 4.21</p> <p>Usefulness of Topic 4.36</p> <p>Faculty Effectiveness 4.50</p> <p>Informal Exchange with Other Participants 4.33</p>	<p>The Texas Center will share feedback with the Children’s Commission and other child welfare stakeholders as needed and appropriate.</p>	<p>Trained 67 judges who handle child protection cases. Survey respondents gave the conference a 4.65 overall rating in a scale of 1-5.</p> <p>Improved court function through a focus on improving the timeliness and quality of court hearings as well as increasing family engagement and permanency.</p> <p>Focused on improving court hearings and engaging families to reduce the time to permanency for children and youth in the foster care system.</p> <p>Targeted improving court function through trauma-</p>	<p>(See above)</p>

		Individual Conference Evaluations on file with Children’s Commission and Texas Center for Judiciary.		<p>informed systems with info on how courts can incorporate evidence-based trauma informed practices into their processes.</p> <p>Conference participants learned about the Indian Child Welfare Act and the history of Native American involvement in the child protection system as well as meeting the needs of military families involved in the child welfare system, procedural fairness in CPS cases, improving educational outcomes for foster youth, and many other topics.</p> <p>The Child Welfare Judicial Conference increased system capacity by increasing judicial knowledge and expertise.</p>	
Specialized Training for Judges (Implicit Bias)	The Texas Center for the Judiciary held the third Implicit Bias Conference on February 6-7 in Austin, TX.	The Texas Center will survey training participants to demonstrate knowledge gained from the training regarding due process of law, and the importance of timely, thorough and	The Texas Center will share feedback with the Children’s Commission and other child welfare stakeholders as needed and appropriate.	Trained 21 active and retired judges. Survey respondents rated the conference an overall 6.60 on a scale of 1-7. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive.	(See above)

		<p>complete hearings and quality legal representation.</p> <p>Overall Quality of Conference 6.60</p> <p>Overall Training Satisfaction 6.40</p> <p>Helpfulness of TCJ Staff 6.50</p> <p>Quality of Materials 6.20</p> <p>Meeting room set-up/Accommodations 6.50</p> <p>Quality of Meals/Refreshments 6.57</p> <p>Quality of Info Received 6.53</p> <p>Individual Conference Evaluations on file with Children’s Commission and Texas Center for Judiciary.</p>		<p>This judicial training addressed the disproportionate representation of children and families of color in the child welfare system and looks at history, poverty, the structure of power, and the neuroscience of decision-making to encourage participants to re-examine their ideas about who appears in their courtroom and why as well as how to improve outcomes for all children and families.</p> <p>Judges learned about how to improve permanency outcomes through encouraging family engagement, preservation, reunification and adoption. Additionally, the conference encouraged systemic reform through the continued participation of attendees in workgroups and collaborative bodies.</p> <p>Past participants in the</p>	
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				<p>conference have taken this training back to their local jurisdiction and continued the work.</p> <p>The 2012 conference was attended by several members of the Texas Center for Judiciary’s Board of Directors and a portion of it was included in the Texas Center’s annual College for New Judges in January 2013</p>	
Other Trainings	<p>Develop two additional trainings in collaboration with the Children’s Commission targeting judges, attorneys or other key stakeholders to allow them to make better recommendations and decisions for the children and families involved in the child welfare system.</p>	<p>The Texas Center will survey training participants to demonstrate knowledge gained from the training regarding due process of law, and the importance of timely, thorough and complete hearings and quality legal representation.</p>	<p>The Texas Center will share feedback with the Children’s Commission and other child welfare stakeholders as needed and appropriate.</p>	<p>Planned and completed the Permanency Summit at the end of FY2012. No other trainings were developed</p>	(See above)
National Conferences	<p>Process and facilitate Texas judges’ attendance at conferences sponsored by national training organizations. These conferences will give Texas judges a broader perspective on the current issues faced in their own court rooms as well as give them a</p>	<p>The Texas Center will collaborate with the national organizations to survey training participants to demonstrate knowledge gained from the training regarding due process of law, and the importance of timely, thorough and complete hearings and</p>	<p>The Texas Center will share feedback with the Children’s Commission and other child welfare stakeholders as needed and appropriate.</p>	<p>Provided scholarships to 51 judges to attend two national conferences. NCJFCJ collects evaluations of their national conferences. In FY2012, TCJ did not also collect evaluations, however, TCJ will collect evaluations for the</p>	

	<p>chance for collaboration with a different set of peers. Concurrently, the positive practices being applied in Texas can be brought to a national setting. Provide scholarships and travel for 25 judges and other stakeholders to the National Conference on Juvenile and Family Law, March 21-24, 2012 in Las Vegas, NV. Provide scholarships and travel for 25 judges and other stakeholders to the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges' 75th Annual Conference, July 22-25, 2012 in New Orleans, LA. Provide scholarships and travel for judges to attend national or out-of-state education opportunities for judges and/or other stakeholders to attend programs which further promote the Commission's goals and strategies.</p>	<p>quality legal representation.</p> <p>NCJFCJ was 4.3 out of 5.0 scale</p> <p>NCJFL was 4.5 out of 5.0 scale.</p> <p>Individual Conference Evaluations on file with Children's Commission and Texas Center for Judiciary.</p>		<p>FY2013 conferences.</p>	
<p>Judicial Technical Assistance</p>	<p>Provide fiscal and technical assistance to the Children's Commission via the JTA program. Provide funds to help bring expert speakers/trainers to local</p>	<p>The Texas Center and/or other stakeholders will survey courts after provision of data and/or local trainings to ascertain whether increase in knowledge,</p>	<p>The Texas Center will share feedback with the Children's Commission and other child welfare stakeholders as needed and appropriate.</p>	<p>The JTA was in partnership with the Center for Public Policy Priorities, which primarily assists with the facilitation of Commission sponsored</p>	

	jurisdictions to improve legal representation and advocacy and case processing.	change in court performance, or other impact due to judicial technical assistance.		Round Tables.	
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Narrative Description: The training provided by the Texas Center is intended to enhance judicial knowledge and expertise among the judges who hear child protection cases across the state. This increased level of judicial expertise will help improve the quality of decision making in child protection cases and promote safety, permanency, and wellbeing for children and families involved in the child welfare system.

Implicit Bias in Decision-Making – The Texas Center for the Judiciary held the third Implicit Bias Conference on February 6-7 in Austin, TX. This judicial training addresses the disproportionate representation of children and families of color in the child welfare system and looks at history, poverty, the structure of power, and the neuroscience of decision-making to encourage participants to re-examine their ideas about who appears in their courtroom and why as well as how to improve outcomes for all children and families. This conference aims to improve permanency outcomes through encouraging family engagement, preservation, reunification and adoption. Additionally, the conference encourages systemic reform through the continued participation of attendees in workgroups and collaborative bodies. Many past participants in the conference have taken this training back to their local jurisdiction and continued the work. The 2012 conference was attended by several members of the Texas Center for Judiciary’s Board of Directors. They were so inspired by the training that they insisted that a portion of it be included in the Texas Center’s annual College for New Judges.

National Conference on Juvenile and Family Law – The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges was held on March 21-24 in Las Vegas, NV. The Texas Center provided scholarships to 24 judges from across Texas. The scholarships were awarded based on a competitive application process. Applicants had to specify the percentage of their docket that was comprised of child welfare cases. Preference was given to judges with a higher percentage of child welfare cases. The training improved court function with sessions on judicial leadership, cases affected by the Indian Child Welfare Act, assisting parties with limited English proficiency, trauma-informed systems of care, and family engagement. The training is also linked to capacity building as it increased judicial knowledge and expertise.

Child Welfare Judicial Conference – The Texas Center held the Child Welfare Judicial Conference on June 4 – June 6 in San Antonio, TX. This conference targeted judges throughout Texas who hear child protection cases. Due to the fragmented nature of the Texas court system, it is vitally important to bring together these judges to share best practices and work on common solutions. TCJ staff worked closely with the Children’s Commission to identify priorities for training as well as speakers. The conference improved court function through a focus on improving the timeliness and quality of court hearings as well as increasing family engagement and permanency. Judge Michael Key kicked off the conference with a session on “Reducing Time to Permanency” followed with a session entitled “Why Can’t the Kids Go Home Today?”. Both of these presentations focused on improving court hearings and engaging families to reduce the time to permanency for children and youth in the foster care system. Additional sessions targeted improving court function through trauma-informed systems. Judge Joan Byer presented with Kristine Buffington on the effects of trauma on children and families involved in the child welfare systems and how courts can

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incorporate evidence-based trauma informed practices into their processes. Conference participants learned about the Indian Child Welfare Act and the history of Native American involvement in the child protection system as well as meeting the needs of military families involved in the child welfare system, procedural fairness in CPS cases, improving educational outcomes for foster youth, and many other topics. The Child Welfare Judicial Conference increased system capacity by increasing judicial knowledge and expertise.

National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges 75th Annual Conference – The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges Annual Conference was held July 15-18 in New Orleans, LA. The Texas Center was able to provide scholarships to 25 judges from across Texas. Scholarships were awarded on a competitive basis. Scholarship seekers had to fill out an application specifying the percentage of their docket comprised of child welfare cases (applicants with a higher percentage of child welfare cases were more likely to receive an award). Applicants also had to agree to attend the Child Welfare Judicial Conference in San Antonio as a condition of the scholarship. The conference improved court function with sessions on trauma and creating trauma-informed systems, immigration issues and assisting parties with limited English proficiency, the Indian Child Welfare Act and judicial leadership in improving educational outcomes for youth in foster care. The conference increased system capacity by increasing judicial knowledge and expertise.

Texas Permanency Summit – During the 2012 grant year, the Texas Center, in collaboration with Texas Appleseed and a Permanency Summit Planning Committee, planned the inaugural Texas Permanency Summit which was held October 7-9, 2012 in San Antonio, TX. The Planning Committee chose targeted jurisdictions around the state as well judges from each of the targeted jurisdictions to lead 5-7 member multidisciplinary teams. In addition to a judge, teams were comprised of a prosecuting attorney, attorney representing parents, guardian ad litem, CPS supervisor, and CASA supervisor. Judges selected their team members. The conference featured presentations by Texas judges and other professionals, moderated panel discussions, and facilitated small group discussions intended to provide insight on best practices and explore innovative solutions to promote more timely permanency for children and youth in care. The training focused on improving court function through family engagement, preservation, reunification and adoption. Additionally, the conference engaged in capacity building by increasing judicial and attorney knowledge and expertise, cross-training with multidisciplinary stakeholders and data-sharing. The conference promoted systemic reform by encouraging judicial leadership in improving permanency outcomes.

Texas Education Summit - The Texas Center began working with the Children's Commission as well as an Education Summit Planning Committee to design and plan an Education Summit to be held in 2013. This conference will bring together stakeholders from education, child welfare and the court system to support collaboration in order to address the educational challenges faced by children in the foster care system and improve education outcomes for these children. The training will promote capacity building by increasing judicial knowledge and expertise, cross-training with multidisciplinary stakeholders, and data sharing across systems. It will also focus on systemic reform through the promotion of judicial leadership in support of multidisciplinary collaboration to improve educational outcomes for foster children and youth.

Judicial Technical Assistance – The Texas Center worked with the Center for Public Policy Priorities (CPPP) to provide judicial technical assistance to address permanency for children and youth in care in Texas. CPPP provided data analysis, research and training to courts throughout the state including reports on permanency outcomes for jurisdictions throughout the state. The technical assistance provided by CPPP promoted capacity building by collecting data and sharing data as well as increasing judicial knowledge and expertise.

Office of Court Administration Judicial Training for Child Protection Court (CPC) Judges

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Outcome #1: CPC Judges will gain increased knowledge about the law and practice around the state and the nation since the training usually incorporates state, local and national trends and issues affecting child welfare. Increased knowledge and education will increase skill in handling child protection cases and drive behavioral changes within jurisdictions.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: In Texas, 17 specialty court judges hear roughly 30 percent of the child welfare cases annually. The specialty child protection court judges must become and remain knowledgeable about the law and case process in child welfare cases.

Measurable Objective: Training events, provision of judicial technical assistance and resources, and engagement in collaborative efforts.

Timeframe: March 2012

Funding Stream: Training

Strategic Category: All

- Capacity Building Court Function Improvement Systemic Reform

Project Activities	Anticipated Outputs and Results of Activities	Data Source for Evaluation (CQI Element)	Feedback (CQI Element)	Progress Toward Outputs and Activities	Collaboration
Child Protection Court Annual Update	OCA will provide a training session to target issues specific for approximately 37 judges and staff involved in child protection cases.	OCA will survey training participants to demonstrate knowledge gained from the training regarding due process of law, and the importance of timely, thorough and complete hearings and quality legal representation. In their conference evaluations, the ratings	OCA will share feedback with the Children’s Commission and other child welfare stakeholders as needed and appropriate.	OCA hosted a successful 1 1/2-day Child Protection Conference that focused on relevant topics for 26 child protection judges and staff. In addition, 5 associate judges were able to attend various training sessions throughout the year that were designed to	Applicable to all project activities: OCA will collaborate with the Children’s Commission to ensure that the programs and initiatives supported by CIP identify and develop best practices to improve outcomes in child

		<p>attendees gave were mostly 4s and 5s on a scale from 1 to 5, with nothing below a 3. A court coordinator did mention that training geared more toward their support role would be appreciated.</p>		<p>improve court practices. OCA staff designed the Child Protection Conference topics to assist the judges in evaluating court practices and to encourage them to make changes, if necessary, that will result in better outcomes for children.</p>	<p>protection cases and that these are shared on a statewide level. OCA staff will work directly with the Children’s Commission to tailor judicial training curricula to include those practices determined to be most effective both nationwide and specific to Texas.</p>
<p>Other specialized training opportunities</p>	<p>OCA and judges will identify specialized child abuse and neglect training opportunities for judges and staff to attend. Child Protection judges and staff will attend the conferences, seminars, meetings and workshops that target issues specific to child projection.</p>	<p>OCA will survey training participants to demonstrate knowledge gained from the training regarding due process of law, and the importance of timely, thorough and complete hearings and quality legal representation.</p>	<p>OCA will share feedback with the Children’s Commission and other child welfare stakeholders as needed and appropriate.</p>	<p>All CPC judges will attend the Child Welfare Judges Conference from now on and the CPC Judges conferences will be discontinued.</p>	

Narrative Description:

OCA hosted a successful 1 1/2-day Child Protection Conference that focused on relevant topics for 26 child protection judges and staff. In addition, 5 associate judges were able to attend various training sessions throughout the year that were designed to improve court practices. OCA staff designed the Child Protection Conference topics to assist the judges in evaluating court practices and to encourage them to make changes, if necessary, that will result in better outcomes for children.

Attorney Training and Resources

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Outcome #1: Attorneys will gain increased knowledge about the law and practice around the state and the nation since the training usually incorporates state, local and national trends and issues affecting child welfare. Increased knowledge and education will increase skill in handling child protection cases and drive behavioral changes within local practices and consequently within jurisdictions.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: Well-educated attorneys are necessary to assist clients in protecting due process rights. They are also able to better advocate for appropriate and necessary services while helping courts render clear specific court orders. Better legal representation leads to more timely resolution of child welfare cases, ensuring that children are placed in a permanent home more quickly. Training opportunities for attorneys practicing child welfare law have historically been limited, especially in more rural areas of the state. There is need to increase training opportunities and improve training resources for attorneys in this area of the law. This project facilitates attorney attendance at state and national conferences and provides resources for attorneys to use which will enhance their advocacy skills.

Measurable Objective: Develop and make available training events, practitioner resources, and tools.

Timeframe: 10/01/11 – 09/30/12

Funding Stream: Training

Strategic Category: All

- Capacity Building Court Function Improvement Systemic Reform

Project Activities	Anticipated Outputs and Results of Activities	Data Source for Evaluation (CQI Element)	Feedback (CQI Element)	Progress Toward Outputs and Activities	Collaboration
Trial Skills Training	Develop Trial Skills Training and Resources for Texas attorneys who represent DFPS, parents, and children.	The Children’s Commission or other stakeholders will survey training participants to demonstrate knowledge gained from the training regarding due process of	Share feedback with the Children’s Commission and other child welfare stakeholders as needed and appropriate.	Trial Skills Training Workgroup in collaboration with NACC is has developed a case scenario from which a hands-on training workshop is being	Applicable to all projects / activities: The Children’s Commission will collaborate with DFPS, the State Bar of Texas, local bar

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	<p>Dissemination of training to occur in FY 2013.</p>	<p>law, and the importance of timely, thorough and complete hearings and quality legal representation.</p>		<p>designed with Texas-specific law, policy, and terminology. The course will be taught by an experienced, core Texas faculty who will present the case scenario and related litigation exercises. After an initial pilot, the training will be presented around the state over a period of up to four years.</p>	<p>associations, the State Bar of Texas Child Abuse and Neglect Committee, Texas CASA, members of the Texas judiciary, attorneys who represent DFPS, children, or parents, and child welfare stakeholders to develop and support attorney training and resources related to child welfare issues, in efforts to improve the quality of legal representation in child welfare cases. Additionally, the Children's Commission will collaborate with national organizations such as the Court Improvement Project directors from neighboring states, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, the National Association of Counsel for Children, and the American Bar Association Center on the Children and the Law Parent Representation Project, to coordinate resources and bring</p>
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					expertise on relevant topics for training and other resources for Texas attorneys.
State Bar of Texas Child Abuse and Neglect Committee Multi-Disciplinary Child Welfare Law Conference	Plan and implement one multi-disciplinary Child Welfare Law Conference.	The State Bar of Texas Child Abuse and Neglect Committee will survey training participants to demonstrate knowledge gained from the training regarding due process of law, and the importance of timely, thorough and complete hearings and quality legal representation.	The State Bar of Texas Child Abuse and Neglect Committee will share feedback with the Children’s Commission and other child welfare stakeholders as needed and appropriate.	The committee postponed the conference due to schedule conflicts. The project was moved to 2013 and combined with the Keeping Infants and Toddlers Safe (KITS) scheduled for June 2013.	
Child Abuse and Neglect Track at the State Bar of Texas Advanced Family Law Conference	Provide registration scholarships to attorneys who represent DFPS or who accept appointments to represent parents and children in child welfare cases to attend the one-day Child Abuse and Neglect Track.	The State Bar of Texas will survey training participants to demonstrate knowledge gained from the training regarding due process of law, and the importance of timely, thorough and complete hearings and quality legal representation. 95 percent of respondents said the conference was useful to their practice. 85 percent of respondents said what they learned at the conference would	The State Bar of Texas will share feedback with the Children’s Commission and other child welfare stakeholders as needed and appropriate.	Child Abuse and Neglect Track at the State Bar of Texas Advanced Family Law Conference: Registration scholarships of \$100 each for 124 attorneys to attend the one-day Child Abuse and Neglect Workshop were awarded.	

		<p>enhance their ability to represent clients.</p> <p>65 percent of respondents named at least one practice change they intended to make as a result of what they learned at the conference. Examples include:</p> <p>"Grounds on which I seek termination."</p> <p>"Increase time spent with the children I represent-- understand them."</p> <p>"I will be more careful with my objections and getting certain things on the record, even at the pre-final stages."</p> <p>"Adopting a new letter to send to parents upon receiving an appointment. Getting in touch with an immigration specialist earlier."</p>			
<p>National Association of Counsel for Children Annual Conference</p>	<p>Provide registration scholarships to attorneys who represent DFPS or who accept appointments to</p>	<p>The National Association of Counsel for Children (NACC) will survey training participants to demonstrate knowledge gained from the training regarding due process of</p>	<p>The NACC will share feedback with the Children’s Commission and other child welfare stakeholders as needed and appropriate.</p>	<p>NACC Annual Conference Attorney Scholarships: Commission staff provided \$400 scholarships to 17 attorneys to attend this annual training on legal</p>	

	<p>represent parents and children in child welfare cases to attend</p>	<p>law, and the importance of timely, thorough and complete hearings and quality legal representation.</p> <p>80 percent of respondents said the conference was useful to their practice.</p> <p>80 percent of respondents named at least one practice change they intended to make as a result of what they learned at the conference. Examples include:</p> <p>"A more comprehensive approach to time-management and more advanced planning in terms of evidence from the beginning of a case."</p> <p>"I now meet with my parent clients in a formal meeting at my office, if at all possible before each and every hearing."</p> <p>"I make sure my clients understand that I represent them, not CPS."</p> <p>" I help them research to locate relatives' contact information in the event the children cannot be reunited with my parent</p>		<p>representation in child abuse and neglect cases.</p>	
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		clients."			
Parent Attorney Leadership Conference	With other ACF Region VI CIP directors and the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law Parent Representation Project, plan and implement one parent attorney leadership conference to identify strategies for improving the quality of legal representation of parents.	<p>The American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law and other conference partners will survey training participants to demonstrate knowledge gained from the training regarding due process of law, and the importance of timely, thorough and complete hearings and quality legal representation.</p> <p>100 percent of respondents said the conference was useful to their practice.</p> <p>82 percent of respondents named at least one practice change they intended to make as a result of what they learned at the conference. Examples include:</p> <p>"Use of representation contracts with parents."</p> <p>"I plan to listen to and communicate better to my parent clients and advocate for the parent to get the services he/she needs to never return to</p>	The conference partners will share feedback with the Children's Commission and other child welfare stakeholders as needed and appropriate.	<p>Parent Attorney Leadership Conference: This training held September 11-12,, 2012 in Oklahoma City was a joint project of federal Court Improvement Program leaders, and multidisciplinary teams from LA, NM, OK, AK. Each state developed an action plan. The Texas Action Plan includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Design and convene a statewide Child Welfare Law Conference; 2. Adopt Standards of Representation for Parents' Attorneys; 3. Identify organization that can develop and operate a parent-focused resource such as an Information Packet or Guide for Parents, including parent client's rights, attorney duties, remedies for ineffective assistance, and grievance process; 4. Design and convene Family Time Round Table to discuss child welfare agency's current policies 	

		<p>the CPS court by addressing the problems that led to the parent's CPS involvement and by practicing non-adversarial behavior with other parties."</p> <p>"Change the way I talk or listen to clients; try to implement a Parent Advocate forum/mentor system; Change the term visitation to family time."</p>		<p>and practices regarding family visits and visitation;</p> <p>5. Improve Family Placements at Beginning of Conservatorship Case</p>	
Attorney Practitioner Manual	Update and enhance existing Attorney Practitioner Manual to include changes in legislation and information about best practices and topics relevant to child welfare cases.	The Children's Commission will survey practitioners to demonstrate knowledge gained from the training regarding due process of law, and the importance of timely, thorough and complete hearings and quality legal representation.	Share feedback with the Children's Commission and other child welfare stakeholders as needed and appropriate.	Attorney Practitioner Manual: The Attorney Practitioner Manual was not updated in FY 2012 as planned for lack of staff time, but is on the agenda for fall 2013 after the legislative session.	
Attorney Appointment Eligibility Training	Partner with State Bar of Texas and practicing attorneys to support development of new on-line training for attorneys seeking appointments to represent parents and children in child welfare cases.	The State Bar of Texas will survey training participants to demonstrate knowledge gained from the training regarding due process of law, and the importance of timely, thorough and complete hearings and quality legal representation.	The State Bar of Texas will share feedback with the Children's Commission and other child welfare stakeholders as needed and appropriate.	In FY2012, Commission helped develop two training courses on representing parents and children in CPS cases designed to assist attorneys in meeting the statutorily required minimum three hours of continuing legal education (CLE) training to be eligible for appointment as an attorney ad litem in CPS	

				<p>cases. Both courses were filmed at the State Bar's studio, in November 2011 and May 2012. Attorneys who represent children, parents, or the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) in CPS cases can take either or both courses free of charge.</p> <p>Commission Staff has also worked with the State Bar of Texas to create a larger, ongoing, online video library focused on CPS issues and taped as live webinars and will offer full CLE credit to attorneys. Two CLEs have already been taped at the SBoT and will be available shortly. These are in the areas of advocating on educational issues for older youth in CPS cases, and issues involving representing the teen parent in a CPS case. Other possible future topics include the following:</p> <p>Youth Aging Out issues (extended foster care; extended jurisdiction; and benefits available to older youth)</p> <p>Preserving error and</p>	
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				appeals issues in CPS cases. Discovery in CPS cases (this could be a series) Jury selection series (jury demand, jury charge, voir dire) SIJS/ immigration issues Pretrial matters Mediation in CPS cases.	
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Narrative Description:

Trial Skills Training Workgroup in collaboration with NACC is developing a case scenario from which a hands-on training workshop can be designed with Texas-specific law, policy, and terminology. The course would be taught by an experienced, core Texas faculty who would present the case scenario and related litigation exercises. After an initial pilot, the training would be presented in each appellate jurisdiction around the state over a period of up to four years.

State Bar of Texas Child Abuse and Neglect Committee Multi- Disciplinary Child Welfare Law Conference: The committee postponed the conference due to schedule conflicts. The project was moved to 2013 and combined with the Keeping Infants and Toddlers Safe (KITS) scheduled for June 2013.

Child Abuse and Neglect Track at the State Bar of Texas Advanced Family Law Conference: Registration scholarships of \$100 each for 124 attorneys to attend the one-day Child Abuse and Neglect Workshop were awarded.

NACC Annual Conference Attorney Scholarships: Commission provided \$400 scholarships to 17 attorneys to attend this annual training on legal representation in child abuse and neglect cases.

Parent Attorney Leadership Conference: This training held September 11-12,, 2012 in Oklahoma City was a joint project of federal Court Improvement Program leaders, and multidisciplinary teams from LA, NM, OK, AK. Each state developed an action plan. The Texas Action Plan includes: 1. Design and convene a statewide Child Welfare Law Conference; 2. Adopt Standards of Representation for Parents’ Attorneys; 3. Identify organization that can develop and operate a parent-focused resource such as an Information Packet or Guide for Parents, including parent client’s rights, attorney duties, remedies for ineffective assistance, and

grievance process; 4. Design and convene Family Time Round Table to discuss child welfare agency's current policies and practices regarding family visits and visitation; 5. Improve Family Placements at Beginning of Conservatorship Case

Attorney Practitioner Manual: The Attorney Practitioner Manual was not updated in FY 2012 as planned for lack of staff time, but is on the agenda for fall 2013 after the legislative session.

Attorney Ad Litem Appointment Eligibility Online Training: Commission staff helped develop two training courses on representing parents and children in CPS cases designed to assist attorneys in meeting the statutorily required minimum three hours of continuing legal education (CLE) training to be eligible for appointment as an attorney ad litem in CPS cases. Both courses were filmed at the State Bar's studio, in November 2011 and May 2012. Attorneys who represent children, parents, or the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) in CPS cases can take either or both courses free of charge.

Data and Technology CIP Projects and Staff

[\(Return to Project List\)](#)

Outcome #1: Data and technology related projects will be completed on time and according to the specifications set forth by the Children's Commission. These projects will allow robust data collection and information sharing, ultimately leading to efficient court operations and more positive outcomes for youth and families. In FY 2012, with the additional IT staff, the Children's Commission expanded some existing projects and added new projects, including, an education website, a notice and engagement system and an attorney tracking and billing system.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: Technology is a crucial part of developing innovative solutions to CIP programs and initiatives. In the past, CIP has relied on contract staff to perform these services. Having a dedicated staff will both increase efficiency, as workers are able to fluidly adapt to changing needs and priorities, and significantly decrease costs of developing technology solutions to problems, and in collecting data. CIP will be able to create more high-quality programs at a lower cost and in a way that is more responsive to its audience.

Measurable Objective: Each project will be given an estimate as to the level of effort required to complete the project. Number of CPCMS operation activities and enhancements will be tracked. Other projects identified and implemented will be monitored and tracked for timely completion.

Timeframe: 10/01/11 – 09/30/12

Funding Stream: Data

Strategic Category: All

Capacity Building Court Function Improvement Systemic Reform

Project Activities	Anticipated Outputs and Results of Activities	Data Source for Evaluation (CQI Element)	Feedback (CQI Element)	Progress Toward Outputs and Activities	Collaboration
Provide dedicated data and technology staff to the CIP Program.	Time and cost efficient delivery of technology projects intended to improve child protection court processes and outcomes in Texas.	The Project Manager will track the project team's accuracy of effort estimations as well as the number of projects completed.	The Office of Court Administration (OCA) will share project outcomes with the Children's Commission, DFPS, and other interested child welfare	Provided dedicated data and technology staff to the CIP: Before FY 2012, the CIP Data project team consisted of a full-time project manager and a contract	Applicable to all projects / activities: The technology grant will continue existing collaborations with the Texas Conference of Urban Counties,

Attachment C

		See Progress Section for evaluation information.	stakeholders on a regular basis.	programmer/business analyst. In FY2012, the contract programmer transitioned to a regular full-time employee, an in-house OCA programmer was hired. The programmer initially worked half time for CIP and half time for OCA, but has transitioned to working full time for CIP. The CIP project team now has three full-time employees – project manager, a business analyst/project lead and a programmer	the Department of Family and Protective Services, the Office of Court Administration’s Child Protection Courts, as well as the other committees of the Children’s Commission in order to provide for the efficient data collection and analysis to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the child protection courts across Texas.
Child Protection Case Management System (CPCMS)	Daily Operations	Operation Activities Completed included the provisioning of new court or users, running data queries / reports, tracking other normal care activities to ensure a successful system operation, timeliness of completion of operational activities / response.	OCA management team, Child Protection Court Advisory Group, Children’s Commission	Daily operations and maintenance occurred on an ongoing basis throughout FY2012. Users were assisted, data and queries were run and available to the judges, OCA staff.	
Child Protection Case Management System (CPCMS)	Enhancements (data, functional, and reporting).	CIP Staff	OCA management team, Child Protection Court Advisory Group, Children’s Commission	There were no enhancements in FY2012	

Child Protection Case Management System (CPCMS)	Calendar Export – Develop and implement court docket calendar export in a standard format.	Survey of CPCMS Users: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of users synchronizing docket calendar information onto their personal devices (blackberries, iPhones). • Number of users synchronizing docket calendar information between applications (case management systems). 	OCA management team, Child Protection Court Advisory Group, County/District Court staff & IT staff partnering with OCA, Children’s Commission	Exporting CPCMS Court Docket Calendar in a standard calendar format to enable other devices (e.g., blackberries, iPhones) and applications (case management systems) to process and display the Docket Calendar information outside of the CPCMS system is still pending.	
Child Protection Case Management System (CPCMS)	Role Based Security - Implement security to allow individual courts to determine what user roles exist and the appropriate permissions (none/read/write) for that role.	Based on requests from users and other stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined user roles anticipated to increase from 4 to 12 roles based on user requirements analysis. • Adoption and utilization of CPCMS by independent county courts and district courts. 	OCA management team, Child Protection Court Advisory Group, County/District Court staff & IT staff partnering with OCA, Children’s Commission	There are expanded roles based security for CPCMS to accommodate other user roles that can be authorized for view only, data entry only, a restricted combination of and data entry, or unlimited view and data entry.	
Child Protection Case Management System (CPCMS)	Training/Marketing Videos (online)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing video modules will be revised and updated, and new modules will be produced to cover functional enhancements implemented during the prior 12-18 months. • Video modules will be accessible through a public web page and access will be 	OCA management team, Child Protection Court Advisory Group, Children’s Commission	Rather than updating all training and marketing videos to cover all of the v3.0 through v3.3 releases in 2011 and the v4.0 through v4.3 releases in 2012, training videos will be made on an as needed basis. Demos on the CPMS website to provide interested courts/independent counties the ability to test drive the CPCMS with	

		monitored and tabulated.		their own data.	
Video Conferencing for Child Protection Hearings – Phase II	Phase II of pilot project to use Internet based video conferencing technology to enable children involved in child abuse and neglect cases to participate in the court hearing dealing with the child’s placement outside of their home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of courts participating in phase II of this project. • Increase the number of children participating (remotely) in their placement and permanency hearings. • Increase the number of group homes or residential treatment centers (RTC) participating in phase II of this project. • Track the number of hearings conducted by each participating court. 	OCA management team, Texas Department of Family & Protective Services (DFPS), Children’s Commission	Video Conferencing: This project enables local courts presiding over child protection cases to have children participate in their placement/permanency hearing without them being physically present in the courtroom. A video link hosted and maintained by OCA provides the judge the opportunity to interact with the child or youth when they cannot be in the courtroom or in attendance at their hearing. Although not a replacement for seeing the child in person, video conferencing can allow the judge can gain perspective on the youth’s issues, wants and needs, and see the child’s demeanor and body language. Phase II of the project (which spans FY2012 and FY2013) has focused on implementing video conference capability in DFPS’ 58 residential treatment center (RTC) facilities where children are in placement. OCA currently works with six courts, and	

				<p>has implemented video conferencing at 28 RTC facilities to date. In 2013, OCA will target an additional 8-10 courts in FY13 to expand court participation. Problems: Some RTC facilities in rural locations do not have access to broadband Internet service OR if they have broadband Internet service it is too slow and they may experience intermittent service interruptions. Some RTC facilities are reluctant to take advantage of the opportunity to participate in this project, but DFPS has assisted in informing the facility that if they are able to participate and opt out, they will be required to transport the child to the courtroom to participate in their placement review hearing in person.</p> <p>Future plans include making the system available for use by other stakeholders; CASA offices could communicate with the clients in RTCs. It could also be used to provide visitation for family members with kids placed</p>	
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				in RTCs.	
Temporary Staffing for CPCMS Data Entry support to child protection courts	Two OCA child protection (CP) courts will be provided assistance with the entry of court case data into the CPCMS to eliminate a current backlog in the data entry. A third CP court will be involved for only a few (5-8) weeks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All open cases in each court will receive one (or more) data entries or document attachments during a 6-8 month temporary staffing period. All data entries or document attachments will be captured and reported. 	Child Protection Courts supported through this endeavor, OCA management team, Child Protection Court Advisory Group, Children's Commission	Completed in early FY 2012	
Web page for Notice and Engagement	Design and develop a web page for Notice and Engagement of parties involved in child protection cases.	Children's Commission Round Table on Notice and Engagement held in December 2010.		Notice and Engagement Web Application: This project involves using non-confidential case data to build a system whereby notice of statutory hearings and other court-related events requiring notice to parties and interested persons can be distributed electronically. The Children's Commission and DFPS have been collaborating over past 2 years as a result of the CFSR and PIP. Based on feedback from stakeholders such as caregivers and foster parents we still want to build an alert system to ensure that everyone gets notice of non-confidential information on hearings such as name of case,	

				<p>court house, and date/time. At present there is more hearing date information in the CPCMS system than IMPACT. The Children’s Commission and OCA can develop a user friendly tool to solve the problem by providing hearing data to any user with a valid email address.</p>	
<p>Attorney Assignment and Billing System</p>	<p>Confirm functional requirements, then design and develop a new system for tracking attorney assignments for children and respondents, and track the billing for those services.</p>	<p>Children’s Commission Legal Representation / Reform Workgroup.</p>		<p>Attorney Billing System: The role of attorneys appointed to cases is being added to the CPCMS role-based security project for later use that may involve a uniform identification and billing system that can help provide information on the number of Texas attorneys providing legal representation in child protection cases, their level of training, and the amount of money counties are spending on court appointed legal representation year to year. The CPCMS system is being enhanced to include role-based security identifiers for other system stakeholders and advocates as well. A role for caseworkers and CASA volunteers are also being</p>	

				added to allow electronic filing of court reports.	
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Narrative Description:

Provided dedicated data and technology staff to the CIP: Before FY 2012, the CIP Data project team consisted of a full-time project manager and a contract programmer/business analyst. In FY2012, the contract programmer transitioned to a regular full-time employee, an in-house OCA programmer was hired. The programmer initially worked half time for CIP and half time for OCA, but has transitioned to working full time for CIP. The CIP project team now has three full-time employees – project manager, a business analyst/project lead and a programmer.

Education Website: OCA has set up a website devoted to the Education Committee and the projects involving improving education outcomes for children in foster care. The Children's Commission Staff have authority to modify and populate the site with information.

Event Management System: OCA has arranged to purchase web based event management software to help manage the 200+ commissioners, committees, council, stakeholder, and interested person lists currently used by Commission staff. This tool will allow the staff to automate contact information, membership status, and committee assignments and will also help staff to identify and collect federally required match data. The Children's Commission will also use the program for conference marketing and commission meetings.

Notice and Engagement Web Application: This project involves using non-confidential case data to build a system whereby notice of statutory hearings and other court-related events requiring notice to parties and interested persons can be distributed electronically. The Children's Commission and DFPS have been collaborating over past 2 years as a result of the CFSR and PIP. Based on feedback from stakeholders such as caregivers and foster parents we still want to build an alert system to ensure that everyone gets notice of non-confidential information on hearings such as name of case, court house, and date/time. At present there is more hearing date information in the CPCMS system than IMPACT. The Children's Commission and OCA can develop a user friendly tool to solve the problem by providing hearing data to any user with a valid email address.

Attorney Billing System: The role of attorneys appointed to cases is being added to the CPCMS role-based security project for later use that may involve a uniform identification and billing system that can help provide information on the number of Texas attorneys providing legal representation in child protection cases, their level of training, and the amount of money counties are spending on court appointed legal representation year to year. The CPCMS system is being enhanced to include role-based security identifiers for other system stakeholders and advocates as well. A role for caseworkers and CASA volunteers are also being added to allow electronic filing of court reports.

Video Conferencing: This project enables local courts presiding over child protection cases to have children participate in their placement/permanency hearing without them being physically present in the courtroom. A video link hosted and maintained by

OCA provides the judge the opportunity to interact with the child or youth when they cannot be in the courtroom or in attendance at their hearing. Although not a replacement for seeing the child in person, video conferencing can allow the judge can gain perspective on the youth's issues, wants and needs, and see the child's demeanor and body language. Phase II of the project (which spans FY2012 and FY2013) has focused on implementing video conference capability in DFPS' 58 residential treatment center (RTC) facilities where children are in placement. OCA currently works with six courts, and has implemented video conferencing at 28 RTC facilities to date. In 2013, OCA will target an additional 8-10 courts in FY13 to expand court participation. **Problems:** Some RTC facilities in rural locations do not have access to broadband Internet service OR if they have broadband Internet service it is too slow and they may experience intermittent service interruptions. Some RTC facilities are reluctant to take advantage of the opportunity to participate in this project, but DFPS has assisted in informing the facility that if they are able to participate and opt out, they will be required to transport the child to the courtroom to participate in their placement review hearing in person.

Future plans include making the system available for use by other stakeholders; CASA offices could communicate with the clients in RTCs. It could also be used to provide visitation for family members with kids placed in RTCs.

CPCMS: Demos on the CPMS website to provide interested courts/independent counties the ability to test drive the CPCMS with their own data. There are expanded roles based security for CPCMS to accommodate other user roles that can be authorized for view only, data entry only, a restricted combination of and data entry, or unlimited view and data entry. Rather than updating all training and marketing videos to cover all of the v3.0 through v3.3 releases in 2011 and the v4.0 through v4.3 releases in 2012, that training videos will be made on an as needed basis. Exporting CPCMS Court Docket Calendar in a standard calendar format to enable other devices (e.g., blackberries, iPhones) and applications (case management systems) to process and display the Docket Calendar information outside of the CPCMS system is still pending.

Office of Court Administration Remote Interpreter Project

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Outcome #1: There will be enhanced jurisdictional capacity to handle child protection cases. The hearing review process for Spanish speaking cases will be improved. Cases will not be delayed due to lack of an interpreter.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: Courts hearings in child protection cases often lack ready and reliable access to licensed court interpreters. This problem is particularly acute in the rural counties (counties under 50,000 in population) that are served by OCA's child protection courts. Due to lack of availability of licensed court interpreters, the child protection courts often must rely on an ad hoc "interpreter" who is simply lay person (that is, persons without specialized training or other interpretation skills) who has some (often minimal) ability to communicate in two languages.

Use of an unlicensed person to interpret in a court hearing, particularly in child protection hearings which often involve complex legal and medical issues, is problematic at best. Licensed court interpreters undergo rigorous testing and pass both oral and written exams before receiving a license. They must adhere to written standards of ethics and practice and can be disciplined for violations of these standards. Use of a licensed court interpreter is always preferable to reliance on an ad hoc interpreter.

Measurable Objective: To provide interpretation services by telecommunications (video-conferencing, voice over internet protocol, or by speaker-phone) with interpreters located at an office at the OCA. Schedule hearings on-line and use telecommunications technology (videoconferencing, voice over internet protocol, or duplex speaker telephone) to allow the court to communicate with a licensed court interpreter with minimal expense and effort.

Timeframe: 10/01/11 – 09/30/12

Funding Stream: Data

Strategic Category: Court Function Improvement

Capacity Building Court Function Improvement Systemic Reform

Project Activities	Anticipated Outputs and Results of Activities	Data Source for Evaluation (CQI Element)	Feedback (CQI Element)	Progress Toward Outputs and Activities	Collaboration

<p>Provide Spanish Interpreter Services for Child Protection Courts</p>	<p>Better quality hearings for Spanish-speaking CPS families</p>	<p>OCA will collect data on usage for hearings such as dates of service, length of session; determine cost per service; track disposition of cases using a before and after project baseline; using a survey to solicit feedback from DFPS caseworkers, parents, judges, and CASA to gather information regarding the judges' perception of the quality and development of the evidence and information provided at the hearing when a certified court interpreter is used versus when one is not, the judges' overall impression of the effect of the certified interpreter's services on the quality and length of the hearing and whether the availability of a certified court interpreter funded through this project made it possible for the judge to schedule the hearing more promptly than if the interpreter had not been available.</p> <p>See Progress Section for information – this project was (and is) under-</p>	<p>OCA will share data collected and survey responses Children's Commission, DFPS, and other child welfare stakeholders who are interested.</p>	<p>The program is underused and may not be continued in FY2014. OCA Child Protection Courts involved in the project can schedule an interpreter using a web-based calendaring system on a first-come, first-served basis. Licensed court interpreter Mr. Marco Hanson works remotely, using a speaker phone or videoconferencing, to provide courtroom interpretation for as many as 20 hours a week, however, the project has struggled with utilization. Although it is available to all courts in Harris County the process to use it is cumbersome and requires pre-planning, which is sometimes difficult and unmanageable. Mr. Hanson will be meeting with the Offices of Parent and Child Representation to inquire whether they could use his interpreter services.</p>	<p>Children's Commission, Child Protection Court Judges and Coordinators, and State District Court Judges.</p>
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		utilized and will be discontinued.			
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Narrative Description:

The program is underused and will not be continued beyond the end of FY2013. OCA Child Protection Courts involved in the project can schedule an interpreter using a web-based calendaring system on a first-come, first-served basis. Licensed court interpreter Mr. Marco Hanson works remotely, using a speaker phone or videoconferencing, to provide courtroom interpretation for as many as 20 hours a week, however, the project has struggled with utilization. Although it was made available to all courts in Harris County and then to all District Courts, the process to use it is cumbersome and requires pre-planning, which is sometimes difficult and unmanageable. The Children's Commission has worked with OCA to market the service and has sent more than one JIR letter to judges around the state. Mr. Hanson will be meeting with the Offices of Parent and Child Representation to inquire whether they could use his interpreter services to finish out the 2013 fiscal year.

Uvalde County Video Conferencing Project

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Outcome #1: Court function will be improved by eliminating the need for parties in a CPS case to travel to the court by allowing them to participate remotely via a videoconferencing system. The videoconferencing system will promote increased interaction between attorneys and their clients and allow therapists and other experts to more easily participate in hearings.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source

Because there are no children's shelters or residential treatment centers in the three rural counties – Uvalde, Medina and Real – covered by the 38th Judicial District, 80 percent of the children removed from their homes for abuse or neglect must be placed outside their home counties. Transporting children to and from their placement back to their home county for court hearings is costly and disruptive to children's lives. Therapists and other experts must travel long distances to attend court hearings, and in cases in which a parent is incarcerated, the counties incur the costs of transporting the parent to and from court.

Measurable Objective: Provide the equipment and capabilities in the 38th Judicial District Court that allows the court to conduct hearings in which parties can attend via videoconferencing.

Timeframe: 10/01/11 – 09/30/12

Funding Stream: Data

Strategic Category: Court Function Improvement

- Capacity Building Court Function Improvement Systemic Reform

Project Activities	Anticipated Outputs and Results of Activities	Data Source for Evaluation (CQI Element)	Feedback (CQI Element)	Progress Toward Outputs and Activities	Collaboration
Establish videoconferencing capabilities for the 38th Judicial District.	Improved and increased court participation.	The court will collect and report on data when the system has been operational a year. The first year of the project was spent	The court will share data collected with the Children's Commission, DFPS, and other child welfare stakeholders.	The program objectives of establishing videoconferencing capabilities in the court were met. Full implementation of the system can be dependent	Children's Commission, Child Protective Court, CASA, Office of the Attorney General

		<p>coordinating the purchase and installation. The system was not used for any hearings during the 2012 FY, but Ct is holding hearings now, and is collecting information, which will be included in the FY2013 report</p>		<p>on the technological capabilities (such as bandwidth) of the participating facility.</p>	
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Narrative Description:

The 38th Judicial District Court spent the first year of this program coordinating the grant funding, purchasing and setting up the videoconferencing equipment and training court staff on its usage. The videoconferencing equipment will reduce hearing costs and allow the court to conduct hearings more efficiently.

